Public Housing Movement within the Democratized Context

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By

Wu Wai Man

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of the thesis. No part of the thesis has been adopted to fulfill the requirement of other programmes of study.

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撮要

是次研究旨在探討政治機會結構(political opportunities structure) 與香港公共房屋運動的關係，研究範圍由１９８０年至１９９５年，重點則放在１９９１年至１９９５年．研究結果顯示了香港公共房屋運動在後過渡期所遇到的處境，及政黨對其的威脅．

Abstract

The theme of the research is to understand the relationship between the political opportunities structure and the public housing movement of Hong Kong. The research covers the years from 1980 to 1995. But emphasis is placed on the period from 1991 to 1995. It is the period from which the notion of a representative government has entered its final stage before the transition. In addition, it also witnessed the emergency and the proliferation of political parties. The research is based on the premise that the political opportunities structure should not be made identical with the domain of resources. Instead, they should be more strictly defined to achieve analytical clarity. With regard to the political opportunities structure, four dimensions are examined, namely, formal and informal access to challengers; the state's propensity of repression; policy and strategic orientations of the grass-root oriented political parties; and the stability of the political alignment.

The methodology is based on documentary analysis and in-depth interviews. Two case studies are implemented to compare and contrast two specific relationship patterns between political parties and resident groups. Collective action events that concerned about public-housing issues, are employed as the units of analysis for the reason of their accessibility in newspapers. More significantly, they serve as an effective indicator for the research to understand the organizational strength or mobilization capacity of resident groups. A new conceptual devise, i.e., cadre-oriented vs. mass-oriented, is employed to conceptualize the collective actions.

Significant findings are revealed by the research. The rising trend of collective action events from 1991 to 1995 and the relatively large number of annual cases in the same period were the combined result of the retreat of resident groups from the formal institution; the policy and strategic orientation of the grass-root oriented political parties; the protrusion of pro-China resident organizations; and the tolerant position of the Hong Kong Government. With regard to the specific position of resident groups, the real challenge has the grass-root oriented political parties posed to them was the absorption of the potential force of tenant participation, rather than competing with them to persuade tenants

to join the action. The research also demonstrates the differences between the logic of electoral politics and the logic of mass participation. The dissonance with the former logic helped to account for the retreat of resident groups from the formal institution. The case studies imply the vulnerability of resident groups as the pillars or participants of the public housing movement, and the problem of legal legitimacy still bothering them. The research also justifies the separation of the political opportunities structure from the domain of resources in analysis.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

In this research, the main theme is to understand the relationship between political opportunities structure and social movements. The public housing movement of Hong Kong is employed as an illustration. Emphasis is placed on the period since the early 90's. It is the time from which the notion of a representative government has entered a new stage with the introduction of direct election in the Legislative Council, and the territory began to witness the proliferation of political parties and groups.

The selection of the public housing movement as the unit of analysis is not arbitrary but is justified by the following considerations.

The public housing movement, most significantly, offers a good example for the research to delineate how changes in the political opportunities structure interact with movement development. The emergency of the public housing movement was a response to the closed political system that lacked formal channels for mass political participation. With the inauguration of the 1982 District Board Election, most of the movement organizations or resident groups began to send members to campaign in elections. However, they tended to retreat from participating in institutional politics after a few elections. Since the early 90's, they seem to have endured more serious challenges when the scope of direct election has increased and there has been the proliferation of political parties. Besides, as public housing issues have been one of the major concerns of society, news about or affiliated to it, for example, the related protest activities,

have received considerable attention from the press. This consistent news coverage provides a valuable source for documentary analysis.

Apart from these, since the provision of public housing in Hong Kong was/is obviously a kind of collective consumption (Castells et al., 1991), the public housing movement here offers a good example to study how the state's decision to provide socially valued goods for its people led to the proliferation of concerning protest activities, and the various dynamics arising from the provision.

Literature Review

Literature concerning the housing movement of Hong Kong can be classified into two categories. The first category mainly delineated various features characterizing the early stage of the public housing movement (Lui and Kung, 1985; Fung, 1988; Wong, 1988; Cheung and Louie, 1991). The second category, on the other hand, discussed challenges faced by residents groups as a result of the democratization context (Leung, 1989; Lui, 1989; Kin, 1992, Kwok,1992).

Literature of the first category tended to focus on the period from mid 1970's to mid 1980's. They addressed about the pattern of the movement as well as factors conducive to its development.

Pattern of the movement

There was a steady increase in the number of housing conflict. During the period between 1976 and 1983, according to Lui and Kung (1985), at least ten

cases of conflict involving housing issues were recorded annually except 1979 and 1983. Another research by Cheung and Louie (1991) also averred a stable increase in housing conflicts from the years of 1975 to 1986, except 1983. Among the 169 cases, the majority, 137 cases, concerned about the provision, allocation, management and the rent of public housing.

A trend of intensification of housing conflicts was recognized. From 1975 onwards, a housing conflict would bring about two or more events initiated by residents (Lui and Kung, 1985). Besides, joint-action from different estates became more probable after the formation of the People's Council on Public Housing Policies, and the period between 1980 and 83 were the heyday of joint-action (Fung, 1990).

With regard to the mode of action, the public housing movement has employed the campaign strategy (Wong, 1988). The movement has accepted the legitimacy of the government in distributing resources; what it intended to challenge was how such resources were allocated. According to Cheung and Louie (1991), protest and mass rally were more likely to be used in housing conflicts than other conflicts.

Conducive Factors

The flourish of the public housing movement since the mid 1970's was highly related to the policy that the Hong Kong Housing Authority was made financially autonomous (Lui and Kung, 1985). From 1977 onwards, the Housing Authority was not required to pay any premium for land granted by the government for building public housing. Loans from the Developmental Fund

were to be repaid over forty years, with an annual interest rate of 5%. Tenants had to be self-responsible for the maintaining and the operational costs of their estates. Surplus from rent was to be used to finance new dwellings. Because of this policy of self-financing, tenants in Mark II Estates---- estates that were poorly constructed and had a high maintaining cost, had to bear substantial rent increase but sub-standard infrastructure. Hence, their discontent towards the Housing Authority was accelerated, sowing the seed of collective action.

The flourish was also germane to the land policy of the government, in which more accessible land, i.e., those in the urban region, were reserved for commercial uses and private housing, while new public estates and temporary resettlement areas were mainly constructed in the New territories, lacking adequate infrastructure.

The dissatisfactions of tenants were expressed in non-institutionalized actions such as protests because there was no effective formal channel of participation and consultation. Most of the Mutual Aid Committees were co-opted by the government. Beside, members in the Legislative Council were appointed by the governor, the majority of which were with upper class background (Fung, 1990).

Literature of the second category tended to focus on the period after the late 1980's. They addressed about new problems faced by residents groups or the public housing movement associated with the progressive democratization process. One of them and also the most challenging problem, was the formation and development of political parties.

The emergency and proliferation of political parties have hindered the survival and development of most residents groups. When compared, the former were in a more advantageous position than the latter within the democratized context.(Lui, 1989; Kwok, 1992). It was because the most important aim of political parties were to sponsor their members for elections so that they could advise, criticize and occasionally block proposal put forward by the government through institutionalized means. Since members represented the party and used the name of the party to run for elections, the legitimacy of the party was confirmed when its members (of majority) became councillors or District Board members. Such legal legitimacy was conducive for mobilizing support and gaining resources. In addition, access to decision makers was also more likely and easier, that implied a greater chance of having real influence on official policies. On the other hand, resident groups might nominate their members for elections. However, even members were elected, the nature of resident groups stayed as before--- they were still non-institutionalized and thus, lacking the legal legitimacy in the political arena, which made them more difficult to recruit members, strengthened organizational structure as well as influencing government policies effectively and efficiently.

Aspects Neglected by the Literature

The preceding literature help us to understand the public housing movement of Hong Kong. But certain key issues are not sufficiently attended. In the following, these key issues will be elaborated first. Then the research will argue that it is important to have a thorough analysis of the role of the state. This

analysis is particularly necessary with regard to the fact that sufficient attention was not given to this factor by the existing literature concerning about the public housing movement.

The literature focused on the structural strains to account for the rapid emergency of housing conflicts. It was stated that the self-financing policy of the Housing Authority; the official land policy; and the non-existence of effective channel for mass participation and grievances redress; made collective action by tenants as the practical mean to voice out their demands. It was not to deny the significance of structural strains in explaining the development of the public housing movement. But such perspective ignores whether there have been any changes in the political environment that facilitated or induced the series of collective action, apart from discontents. Favourable political opportunities were crucial to the emergency and the development of a social movement. Such viewpoint was echoed in a statement of Tarrow (1994) which claims that:

> Movements are produced when political opportunities are broadened, when they demonstrate the existence of allies and when they reveal the vulnerability of opponents." (pg.23)

The literature recognized the relatively advantageous position of political parties within the democratized context. However, they ignored the inner variations among them and therefore, did not point out which type of political party that has threatened residents groups most. Besides, the discussions remained in an abstract theoretical level and hence, did not illustrate how these two main groups actually competed with each other in the political arena. Moreover, since political parties in Hong Kong could never become the

governing party, all of them were similar to the opposition parties in Western democracy that mainly served the function of monitoring the government. Hence, it is tempting to ask why these opposition parties in the territory did not side with movement organizations to increase or enhance their leverage. This phenomenon seemed contrary to the analysis of Maguire (1995) who realizes that:

> Political interactions between movements and parties are particularly prevalent when parties are in opposition and are building social coalitions for electoral purpose. (1995:199)

Some of the literature (e.g., Cheung and Louie, 1991) only recorded the modes of collective action and counted their frequency without conceptualizing them for further analysis. With regard to this deficiency, the research proposes two dimensions--- cadre-oriented vs. mass-oriented (they are to be explained in chapter four), to classify the collective action events, which undeniably, help the research to achieve analytical clarity and generate insightful information for analysis.

Addressing the Role of the State

Most importantly, the relationship between the state and the public housing movement was not sufficiently addressed. It was realized in some foreign literature (for example, Jenkins and Klandermans, 1995) that the state also exerted prominent influence on movement development and decline, apart from the availability of resources.

The resource mobilization approach (for example, McCarthy and Zald, 1973 and 1977), based on the premise that grievances were relatively pervasive,

stressed on the availability of external support as the determining factor in movement formation and fall. Thus, research attention was given to whether sponsorship from church groups, foundations, organized labour, et al., accessed to potential movement participants. Jenkins and Perrows (1977), for instance, in their study of the American farm worker movement from 1946-1972, showed that insurgencies developed not from an aggregate rise in discontent but from a substantial increase in the level of resources available to support collective protest activities by the national political elites.

However, evinced by Jenkins and Klandermans (1995), it was also necessary to focus on the role of the state, which should not be perceived as merely one of the factors contributing to the discontent of insurgents. It was because being the ultimate arbiter for the allocation of socially valued goods, the state was inevitably the target, sponsor and antagonist for social movements. Besides, being the organizer of the political system, the state shaped the relationship between social movements and the political representation system. According to the authors, the political representation system meant the institutionalized set of organizations including political parties, interest associations and various social institutions, that claimed to represent and aggregate the interests of various social interests. These groups enjoyed access to centers of political decision making and were, thus, members of the polity.

As stated by the authors, the state and its political representation system constituted the political opportunities structure which were central to the emergency and the development of social movements.

Research Direction

Time Scope of the Analysis

The research covers the years from 1980 to 1995. It is because this long coverage enables the research not only to identify observable changes within the public housing movement, but also the dynamics of its political opportunities structure. In addition, the period witnessed several consequential and relevant changes: the inaugurations of direct elections; the structural transformation of the Housing Authority, and the proliferation of political parties, all of which are highly relevant to the development of the public housing movement.

Methodology

The methodology is mostly based on documentary analysis. Raw materials are collected mainly from content analysis of newspapers. The advantage of such method of data collection lies in the fact that it is easily accessible. In addition, the requirement of newspapers to offer lots of news articles each day allows even "less attractive" protest events to be paid attention to, which may not appear in other media, e.g., TV news report and magazines (Rucht and Ohlemacher, 1992). Newspaper clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Asia-Pacific Institute of the Chinese University of Hong Kong constitute the sources. Both of them satisfy the criteria of continuity---- they cover the entire period of study. In addition, a more complete picture of the collective action events concerning issues of public housing can be revealed. It is because the clippings contain reports from more than two newspapers (the ones published by the Catholics Communication

Center include six local newspapers). Though the selection of news reports are first subject to the judgement of those making the clippings, the danger of arbitrary selection is minimized for they were done by two different institutes. Every collective event is counted only once to avoid redundant counting.

Two case studies of movement organizations are implemented in order to attain a more thorough understanding of the impact of political parties on these organizations.

The selection, instead of arbitrary, is based on the consideration that one of them has maintained a close cooperative relationship with its allying political party, while the other has maintained a more distant relationship with its allying political party. Therefore, the impacts of political parties' policy and strategic orientations at these two resident groups can be compared and contrasted.

Apart from the above, other documents such as the Legislative Council Proceedings, the Annual Reports of the Legislative Council, the Office of Members of Executive and Legislative Councils (OMELCO) and the Housing Authority are to be reviewed respectively. In depth interviews with past and present movement participants, as well as District Board members are also carried out.

Content of the Research

Chapter two will elaborate the theoretical framework of the research, i.e., the political opportunities structure. Chapter three will be a construction of empirical indexes for the various dimensions underlying the political opportunities structure. Chapter four will delineate the general configurations

of the collective actions concerning issues of public housing. Chapters five to eight will be an analysis of the dimensions, namely, the government's propensity of repression; the formal and the informal access for participants of the public housing movement; the policy and strategic orientations of the grass-root oriented political parties; and the change in the political alignment---- the protrusions of pro-China resident organizations. Chapter nine will be the concluding section in which the empirical and the theoretical significance of the research will be stated.

The research will evince that there is a seemingly paradox concerning the impact of the political opportunities structure on the public housing movement from 1991-1995. On the one hand, the political opportunities structure facilitated the initiations of collective actions that were about public housing in general; on the other hand, it did not favour a certain form of collective action by the public housing movement in particular.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the concept, political opportunities structure, will be modified. The modifications, instead of disavowing its basic principles, attempt to establish a theoretical framework that will be more appropriate in analyzing the public housing movement within the Hong Kong context.

The immediate section will be an elaboration of the concept. Then it will make explicit how the concept should be revised. Several analyses on movement-party relationship will be elaborated later.

Elaborating Political Opportunities Structure

Research on collective action have averred the importance of the "structure of political opportunities" in determining the fate and timing of social movements (e.g. McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1992, 1994). The research of McAdam (1982), for instance, illustrated how change in the attitude of the federal government towards riots, helped to account for the rise and the demise of the Civil Rights Movement. The analysis of Brockett (1991) also revealed how political systems have conditioned peasant mobilization in Central America.

The concept was first adopted by Eisinger (1973) to account for variations of protest activities among forty-three American cities. A definition is offered by Brockett (1991:254) who perceives political opportunities structure as "the configuration of forces in a (potential or actual) group's political environment that influences that group's assertion of its political claim".

In the below, it will state why political opportunities must be differentiated from the domain of resources (McAdam, 1996). Then the dimensions comprising the political opportunities structure will be illustrated.

Discerning Political Opportunities from Resources

Political opportunities should not be made identical with resources. It seems that political opportunities are one of the many resources, playing a key role in the emergency and development of social movements. But such conceptualization of resources is overly inclusive and thus, "robs the concept of its analytic bite" (McAdam, 1996: 26). Resources and political opportunities should be narrowly defined so that their relative importance in social movements can be easier to access.

Dimensions Comprising the Opportunities Structure

Movement analysts (Brockett, 1991; Kriesi, 1995; McAdam, 1996; Tarrow, 1992, 1994) have specified the germane aspects that consist of a system's structure of political opportunities. In spite of terminological divergences, there is a fairly high level of consensus among their formulations.

The first dimension is the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system to challengers, and whether the nature of the informal procedures in relation to them is exclusive or inclusive.

The second dimension is the stability or instability of the political alignment.

The third dimension is the presence or absence of elite allies.

The fourth dimension is the state's capacity and propensity for repression.

Level of Openness of the Institutionalized Political System & Degree of Inclusiveness of the Informal Procedures

This dimension refers to both the formal political institution and the prevailing strategies used by the state to deal with challengers. Behind this dimension is the notion that challengers are constrained not just by formal institutional structure, but also by the informal strategies, i.e., those unwritten but prevailing practices, typically employed by the authority with regard to them (Kriesi, 1995). A typology is provided by Kriesi (1995).

Table 1. The General Settings for the Approach of Members towards Challengers

	Formal Institutional Structure	
Dominant Strategy	Weak State	Strong State
Exclusive	Formalistic inclusion -formal, but no informal , facilitation of access; strong repression -possibility of veto, but no substantive concessions (Germany)	Full exclusion -neither formal nor informal facilitation of access; strong repression -possibility of neither veto nor substantive concessions (France)
Inclusive	Full procedure integration -formal and informal facilitation of access; weak repression -possibility of veto, but no substantial concessions (Switzerland)	Informal cooptation -no formal, but informal, facilitation of access weak repression -no possibility of veto, but substantial concessions (Netherlands)

Note. From "The Political Opportunity Structure of New Social Movements:

Its Impact on their Mobilization" by Hanspeter Kriesi, 1995, The Politics of Social Protest, p.177.

A strong state refers to the state in which the formal institutional structure is relatively closed--- there is no or little formal access to challengers, while a weak state is just the opposite. Exclusive strategies refers to the informal procedures and prevailing strategies with respect to challengers that are characterized by repression, confrontation and prolarization. Inclusive strategies, on the other hand, mean those tactics that are facilitative, cooperative and assimilative.

According to the research of Kriesi (1995), the social movement sector in the weak, inclusive Swiss State was characterized by a very high aggregate level of mobilization and a very moderate action repertoire. Formal movement organizations tended to be strongly developed. The strong, exclusive French, on the contrary, possessed a lower overall level of mobilization than in the other countries analyzed. Besides, participation was heavily concentrated in unconventional forms, within which violence occurred relatively often. Netherlands and Germany were in the intermediate, with the former more resembled to the Swiss pattern while the latter came closer to the French pattern.

Level of Stability of a System's Political Alignment

This dimension is usually measured by electoral stability. In 60's United States, the Democrats' attempted to seek new sources of support to compensate for its declining electorate not only encouraged changes in voting behaviour but broadened political mobilization in general (Tarrow, 1994). Furthermore, instability of the political alignments could be caused or associated with large

scale upheavals occurring in a society, for example, revolution, which brought about abrupt changes in the political arena, leading to a rise of the political leverage of insurgent groups (McAdam, 1982).

The Presence of Elite Allies

The availability of elite allies is often caused by conflicts within and among such groups. It is because divisions among elites not only provide opportunities to resource-poor groups to engage in collective struggle, more importantly, some elites may side with insurgents to strike their opponent or to increase their bargaining power. In the 1970's and the 1980's, divisions between softliners and hardliners provided openings for opposition movements in Spain and Brazil (Tarrow, 1994).

The State's Propensity & Capacity of Repression

The dimension means the likelihood of movement activities to encounter repression. According to Brockett (1991), the intensity of repression was not directly related to the level of threat perceived by elites. Regimes and leaders varied both in their willingness to tolerate popular mobilization and their capability to respond with coercion instead. Capacity was a necessary precondition for repression. At the same time, the importance of the propensity to repress should not be underestimated. The research of Porta (1996) showed that protest policing did affect the form of movement activities. More tolerant, selective and softer police behaviour favoured protest. More repressive, diffuse and hard technique of policing discouraged the mass and peaceful protest but

fuelled the more radical fringe.

Modifications

The modifications of the "political opportunities structure" concept are necessary for two reasons. First, the concept has been formulated particularly on American and Western European experiences, for example, the cases of Tarrow (1994), Mcadam(1982), Kriesi (1995). Second, the types of the social movements analyzed also varied. Kriesi (1995), for instance, focused on the new social movements including the peace movement, the ecology movement, the feminist movement, etc., while Brockett (1991) put peasant protests as his units of analysis. Still others like Oxhorn (1994) who concentrated on popular mobilizations by the poor urban dwellers. Hence, an unconditional acceptance of the four previously stated dimensions to understand the public housing movement of Hong Kong would undeniably suffer from being ahistorical, i.e., fails to pay attention to the particularities of Hong Kong and the particularities of its public housing movement.

The modifications suggest that the dimension referring to the level of stability of a system's political alignment should be revised. In addition, the dimension that concerns about the presence of elite allies is inappropriate to apply to the political context of Hong Kong. Furthermore, only the propensity of repression needs analysis with regard to the dimension of the state's propensity and capacity of repression. A new dimension, i.e., the policy and strategic orientations of political parties, should be established.

Revising the Dimension about the Level of Stability of a System's Political Alignment

The dimension, i.e., the level of stability of a system's political alignment needs to be revised in analyzing the political context of Hong Kong. According to this dimension, instability of the political alignment facilitates movement mobilization either by seriously undermining the existing power structure or by increasing the political leverage of a single insurgent group. The first condition is always a result of large-scale political turbulence, for example, revolutions, wars within and among nations. The second condition is usually a result of electoral instability, which means the employment of a more friendly attitude by political parties towards movement organizations or side with them in order to become the ruling party (Tarrow, 1992).

Problems of inappropriateness emerge because these conditions have not and cannot happen in Hong Kong. The political context has been well known for its unusual stability.[1] Even three large-scale riots occurred in 1956, 1966 and 1967, they could not shaken the political alignment of Hong Kong. In addition, popular election had not existed until 1982 with the introduction of the District Board Election, and the first political party was established only in 1989.[2] Albeit political parties can now send their members for elections, none of them can become the ruling party given the executive-leading nature of the formal political institution. Thus, the kind of electoral stability has been simply absent in Hong Kong.

Hence, instead of referring to any changes associated with large-scale turbulence or electoral stability, it is much more appropriate to understand this dimension as meaning any changes in the political alignment that were brought

about by the transfer of sovereignty to China. The research will, thus, focus on whether the transition would lead to any change in the power configuration of the public housing movement from 1991-1995. Attention will be paid on the phenomenon that if the transition led to the rise of pro-China resident groups, for the political change might increase the efficacy of these leftist forces, and might encourage them to take a more active role to accompany the transition.

Inappropriateness of the Dimension of the Presence of Elite Allies

Most studies on political opportunities structure have realized the availability of elite support as one of the central determinants in movement or protest mobilizations (e.g., Tarrow, 1992, 1994). It is said that division among them is crucial to the development of a social movement for some of them may side with movement organizations to strike their opponents. Nevertheless, the groups of actors that should be considered as elites and the type of support they provide are never addressed explicitly.

In some instances, elites were referred to the ruling party or members of the polity (Tarrow, 1994; McAdam, 1996) while in others, elites consisted of religious workers, union organizers, revolutionary guerrillas and intellectuals (Brockett, 1991).

If the first category is adopted, problem of inappropriateness occurs. There was no possibility of elite division in the political system of Hong Kong. It was because the political elites here, i.e., the senior civil servants, were obliged to maintain a united front on government policies (Lau, 1982). Even elites are defined as those unofficial political actors that are responsible for programs of

interest to the social movement, i.e., unofficial members of the Hong Kong Housing Authority, according to the preliminary analysis of the research, there was little division among them. It was because the unofficial members were directly appointed by the government and most of them had similar business and professional backgrounds. Furthermore, though some of the member showed their disagreement against some of the policies of the authority, they were partisan members who were just expressing the stance of their respective political parties, which will be analyzed thoroughly in the new dimension, i.e., the policy and strategic orientations of political parties. If non-official Legislative Councillors are considered, also revealed by the preliminary analysis, no non-official-member motions concerning issues of public housing were put forward from 1980-1990. After the introduction of direct election to the council since 1991, all non-officials motions that dealt with public-housing matters were either put forward or amended by representatives from the grass-root oriented political parties, which will be analyzed in the new dimension as well.

On the other hand, if elites are defined according to the second category, the support they offer would mainly be the availability of manpower, material resources and knowledge given the fact that they have been also excluded from the formal institution. But such kind of support should be considered as "resources" not "political opportunities".

Focusing on the State's Propensity of Repression

With regard to the dimension concerning the state's propensity and capacity of repression, the research will focus only on the state's propensity of repression.

It is not to disavow the importance of the capacity of repression. However, one should recognize the fact that the government of Hong Kong has always possessed the adequate and the necessary capacity of repression. There was remarkable expansion of the police in the last two decades. The Hong Kong Police Force has been one of the largest police force in the world in both absolute numbers and proportion to the size of the population (Traver and Gaylord, 1991).

Political Parties' Policy and Strategic Orientations

The inclusion of this dimension to study the public housing movement of Hong Kong is necessary. Literature (for instance, Kwok, 1992) have stated that the emergency and the development of political parties have hindered the survival and further development of most resident groups.

The particularities of Hong Kong's political context require one to treat political parties' orientations as an individual dimension, rather than incorporating it to other dimensions of the opportunities structure. This is due to the fact that any political party could/can never become the governing party in Hong Kong (they would/will never be the government). What they could/can do is through their elected members, to criticize, propose and occasionally block suggestions put forward by the government. Thus, it is better to regard them as an individual entity so as to understand how they interact with the government and movement organizations.

The below section will demonstrate that the policy and strategic orientations of the political parties helped to determine the fate of the social movements---- when the political parties' policy orientation was similar to the movement

organizations and decided to cooperate with them (usually in the short run), the social movements' situation tended to be more favourable. However, when the political parties' orientation changed from cooperative to non-cooperative, the social movements did face a bleak future.

Political parties and Social Movements

Certain research (e.g., Maguire, 1995; Oxhorn, 1994) have put the relationship between political parties and social movements as their focus of concern. Despite the cases' diversities such as different political systems, the studies converged in their findings that social movements, in the long run, tended to be either replaced or displaced by political parties.

Anti-Nuclear Movements in Britain and Italy

Claimed by Maguire (1995: 202), a political party was more inclined to ally with a protest movement when it was in opposition status:

> Opposition parties lack the necessary power within state institutions to implement their policies, and they seek support from politically relevant constituencies in civil society in order to achieve it. To the extent that a protest movement can help serve that purpose, a political party will be interested in establishing contact.

However, their cooperation, rather than being stable, was likely to be ephemeral. A protest movement was very likely to be abandoned by a political party once the former was perceived as an electoral liability. In another instance, a movement was so dependent on a party that the party's fortune becomes its own fortune.

In Britain, the Labour Party sought to ally with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), a leading peace movement organization, by adopting the notion of unilateral disarmament to its official manifesto in order to attract middle-class radicals. But with the changed international environment and the rapid decline of the campaign, alongside with a more favourable internal political context (for example, the party's leadership became more united), the Labour Party finally abandoned its commitment to unilateralism.

To the campaign, such abandon meant the closing of its political opportunities for there was now little to separate the defense policies of Britain's political elites. Even during the "honey-moon" period, the campaign was so dominated by its Labour-Party activists that its strategies and organizational structure were very different from its counterparts in other Western European nations.

In Italy, the majority of peace groups were either assisted or set up by the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and its Youth Federation (FGCI), which (the peace groups) obtained their offices and other resources from local PCI. Since the peace groups were so relied on the PCI, they failed to establish an independent central organization, and thus, were unable to unite internally plus launching effective protest actions directed to the government. The crux was that this over-reliance made the movement's political opportunities structure identical and as bleak as those of the PCI. Because of its continued exclusion from government, the PCI simply lacked the policy resources, i.e., the capacity to influence and determine policy on certain issues at state level, to grant the movement success.

Popular Mobilization in Chile

The research of Oxhorn (1994) evinced that the cooperative relationship between political parties and social movements was evanescent in Chile, too.

From May 1983 to mid 1986, social mobilizations initiated and participated by poor urban dwellers formed the core of the opposition's strategy for securing a transition to democracy. A Comando Unitario de Pobladores (CPU) was established to direct the action of hundreds of popular organizations. Its extent of representation was undermined by the decision of the opposition parties to exclude systematically the vast majority of non-party-member dwellers. The CPU still enjoyed considerable freedom of action yet. But it was dismantled by the opposition parties when the democratization process was implemented by the military government, for the latter feared that radical actions might deter middle-class support and created excuse to the oppressing regime to throttle the still fragile democracy. As a result, the popular sectors as a collective actor were progressively marginalized from Chile's transition process. The poor urban dwellers participated in massive numbers but only confined to registering to vote and voting. The initiative for popular mobilization now came from the political parties on the basis of general appeals for a return to democracy.

What can be inferred from the above is that the position of political parties towards movement organizations is one of utilitarianistic. A political party will not be demure to split with a movement organization when the latter is perceived as an electoral liability.

Concluding the Theoretical Framework

The research will analyze the dynamics of the four dimensions---- (i) the formal institutional structure, and the informal procedures used by the government to deal with challengers; (ii) level of stability of the political alignment; (iii) the state's propensity of repression; (iv) the policy and strategic orientations of political parties. Besides, it will also analyze how they have affected the public housing movement of Hong Kong.

Nevertheless, it possesses no connotation to mean that other aspects such as resources and framing of the environment are trivial to understand the movement. It is for the sakes of conceptual clarity and the scope of the research, only the factor of political opportunities will be analyzed. It is believed that by concentrating on a factor as complex and as board as the political opportunities structure, fecund results will certainly be generated.

Notes

1. Lau's Book, "Politics and Society in Hong Kong" (1982) provides a detailed discussion of the phenomenon.

2. The United Democrats of Hong Kong was the first organization to proclaim itself as a political party.

Chapter 3

Operationalization of the Theoretical Framework

Having elaborated the theoretical framework, this chapter will concentrate on the construction of empirical indexes for the four dimensions. The construction is of utmost significant because it can bridge the gap between abstract theory and empirical analysis.

But before proceeding to elaborate the above, there are matters needed to be addressed, which concern about the operationalization of movement organizations and non-institutionalized action types.

Operationalize Movement Organizations

In this research, movement organizations are operationalized as those organizations that should fulfill the entire below criterion:

(i). they are established to promote and protect interests of public housing tenants;

(ii). they concentrate on non-institutionalized action types to achieve and express their demands;

(iii).they are not formed by the government (non-government organizations).

According to the second criteria, political parties are excluded for their major aim is to establish leverage by institutionalized means, i.e., elections, even though they sometimes resought to non-institutionalized ones like sit-ins and mass demonstrations. According to the third criteria, Mutual Aid Committees (MAC) are not regarded as movement organizations as well. It is because these

tenant-organizations are formed by the District Office and meet regularly with government departments particularly the Housing Offices in their own estates. Thus, they resemble more to lobbying groups rather than movement organizations. Movement organizations, as defined in the research, consisted chiefly of resident groups that were established between mid 70's to mid 80's well before the emergency and proliferation of political parties, and usually formed with the help of social workers or activists. Undoubtedly, some resident groups functioned mainly as providers of social and recreational services. They were, thus, not regarded as the movement organizations. Nevertheless, the term movement organization will be used interchangeably with the term resident group in the research unless specified. In addition, despite of the fact that political parties and the Mutual Aid Committees should not be classified as organizations of the public housing movement, it is not to deny interactions among them. Instead, one should not expect their interplay to be unordinary given their similar concerns.

Operationalize Non-Institutionalized Action Types

One of the definitional criteria of movement organizations is whether "they concentrate on non-institutionalized action types to achieve and express their demands"; hence, what these action types actually mean or refer to should deserve serious attention.

In this research, they are operationalized as "modes of collective action that proclaim their demands or concerns outside formal channels of conflict resolutions". Accordingly, for example, instead of visiting the Omelco Office

to make complaints, grievances are expressed collectively through processions. Such non-institutionalized action types encompass a series of forms. In the research, non-institutionalized action types include the followings:

(i) press conference,

(ii) petition to the Housing Authority,

(iii) petition to the Governor,

(iv) protest and mass rally (procession),

(v) public meeting,

(vi) sit-in.

On the other hand, institutionalized action types include the followings:

(i) closed door meeting with government officials

(ii) closed door meeting with members of the Housing Authority

(iii) petition to the OMELCO i.e., closed door meeting with Legislative Councillors in the OMELCO Office.[2]

Operationalize the Dimensions

Level of Openness of the Formal Political Structure, and Level of Inclusiveness of the Informal Procedures

The dimension refers to the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system to challengers, and whether the nature of the informal procedures in relation to them is exclusive or inclusive. Though these two components jointly affect movement development, they require individual operationalization for the sake of conceptual and analytical clarifications.

The first component, i.e., the level of openness of the institutionalized

political system to challengers, is operationalized as "the level of formal access for public housing movement participants". Owing to the specific context of Hong Kong, the research will look at the formal institution, and the structure of the Housing Authority respectively. The former, i.e. the openness of the formal constitution, is revealed by the following indexes:

(i) if the challengers, i.e., participants of the public housing movement, could send their representatives for elections so that the latter may become members of the formal political structure;

(ii) if there was any formal official channel for the movement participants to express their demands or grievances.

The latter, i.e. the extent that the Housing Authority is subject to public scrutiny, is revealed by the following indexes:

(i)whether the Housing Authority consisted of any elected members;

(ii)which body(ies) that the Housing Authority was directly accountable, and in turn, the extent such body(ies) were subject to public monitoring.

Sources for Analyzing the Indexes

Literature and government documents concerning the constitutional features of Hong Kong are revealed so that a delineation of the development of the formal political structure can be achieved. Besides, the Annul Reports of the Housing Authority are studied.

The second component concerns about the nature of the informal procedures, i.e., those unwritten but prevailing practices, when dealing with challengers.

This component is operationalized as "the level of informal access for public housing movement participants". It is revealed and measured by the following index:

(i). the frequency that representatives of the Housing Authority or those from relevant government departments engaged in meetings with movement participants to discuss matters of concern.

Sources for Analyzing the Index

Content analysis of newspapers is employed when analyzing the index. Cases involving closed-door discussions with representatives from the Housing Authority or relevant government officials; as well as mass meetings that were held by the movement organizations, which involved the attendance of these representatives, were counted.

The Level of Stability of A System's Political Alignment

Instead of focusing on any associated political effects brought by electoral instability or large-scale turbulence, the research will pay attention to changes in the power configuration of the public housing movement as a result of the transfer of sovereignty to China. The dimension is operationalized as "whether there was the protrusions of pro-China resident groups". It is revealed by the following indexes:

(i) whether there were any pro-China resident groups that took part in the initiations of the collective action events during the period of study;

(ii) whether there were any pro-China resident groups that participated in other

sectors related to the public housing movement sector, for example, the formal institution.

Sources for understanding the Index

Content analysis of newspaper is implemented. Election information are also analyzed. Moreover, in order to achieve deeper understanding of these groups, in-depth interviews are conducted.

Political Parties' Policy and Strategic Orientations

The research defines a political party as:

> an institution with a recognizable doctrine, cohesive nationwide organization, continuity in structure and leadership, capability to have candidates elected in elections or even to govern, in brief, as similar to the parties we know in the Western democracies (Louie, 1991:57).

Among them, only those that are more grass-root oriented are chosen for analysis because they have similar policy concerns and constituents with the movement organizations. Empirically, they include the Democratic Party and, the Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood. The former bodies of the Democratic Party, i.e., the Hong Kong United Democrats and the Meeting Point (despite of its middle class image, it did reflect the opinion of the grass-root in public-housing issues), are also put into this category.

The former component of the dimension---- political parties' policy orientation, is operationalized as the grass-root oriented political parties stance on public housing policy.

Sources for Understanding the Component

The policy statements of these political parties are studied. Those concerning public housing are then analyzed.

On the other hand, the latter component: political parties strategic orientation, is operationalized as the major type of constituents that the political parties target at and, tactics used by them to achieve their claims. The political parties' strategic orientation is revealed by the below indexes:

(i) the socio-economic status of the majority of their constituents in terms of the types of housing they live;

(ii) the frequency the members of these parties have put forward questions and motions about public housing policies during meetings of the Legislative Council, and the content of these motions and questions;

(iii). the frequency of collective action on issues of public housing that were mobilized by political parties and the demands of these actions.

Sources for Analyzing the Indexes

To analyze the first index, the reports of the District Boards are reviewed to understand the major type of residential area among various constituencies. Emphasis is placed on those constituencies in which the grass-root oriented parties have cast their participation. To analyze the second index, the annual reports of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Council Proceedings are reviewed. Content analysis of newspapers is used to understand the third index.

Cases Studies

Apart from the above indexes, case studies are also be implemented, with an attempt to achieve a more in-depth knowledge of the influence of this dimension on the movement organizations. Two resident groups are chosen as the units of analysis so as to compare and contrast two different relationship patterns between them and the political parties. The selection is not arbitrary but is based on the following considerations:

(i) one of them was established well before the proliferation of political parties or groups while another one was formed with the assistance of a political party;

(ii) one of them has maintained a very close relationship with the allying political party and another has maintained its independence from the allying political party.

Methodology of the Case Studies

Structured, open-ended interviews with the organization's major participants and members of the related political parties are done.

The State's Propensity of Repression

To understand this dimension, the Public Order Ordinance is analyzed. It was because the ordinance reflected the position or the level of tolerance of the Hong Kong Government towards collective action particularly those non-institutionalized ones. Since the focus of the research is on the collective action events, only the parts of the ordinance concerning about the freedom of assembly

are to be analyzed.

The state's propensity of repression is further operationalized into "the police handling of resident-group activities". The concerned activities were only those non-institutionalized, planned actions with explicit demands on issues of public housing, which took place in open setting, for instance, sit-ins and processions.[1]

The operationalization is based on the fact that the Royal Hong Kong Police Force is part of the government apparatus, whose function is the maintenance of internal order and law. The crux is that it is the legitimate entity entitling to employ force whenever necessary, and also is the government body directly encountering and dealing with protestors. Hence, the ways the police handles protest events actually reflect or represent the ways the Hong Kong government handles protest events. In other words, the police's responses to protests equates with the official attitudes towards protests.

Apart from its validity, the above indicator possesses other advantages. It is easier to observe. One can understand how protesters were tackled through content-analysis of news reports. Besides, as proclaimed by Porta (1996), the police handling events had a direct impact on social movements: it did affect the form of protest in Germany and in Italy.

Several indexes will be employed to reflect how the police have handled protest activities. They are:

(i). whether repression from police was resulted, i.e., whether force has been employed by the police;

(ii). the type(s) of protest behaviour that result in police repression;

(iii).the timing of police repression;

(iv).the degree of force involved;

(v). the reason(s) of repression;

Sources for Analyzing the Indexes

Content-analysis of newspapers is implemented. In addition, interviews with movement participants are also carried out in order to achieve a more complete picture.

Conclusion

Instead of proceeding to an immediate analysis of the above dimensions in the next chapter, the research will expose the general configurations of the collective action events that concerned about issues of public housing estates. The analysis will undeniably, provide fecund information for further analysis.

Notes

1. It is believed that activities taking place in close-setting, for example, press conference, were not likely to be confrontational, and hence, unlikely to arouse or result in repression by the police.

2. The full name of the OMELCO was known as the Office of Members of Executive and Legislative Councils. Every member of the Legislative Council was required to take his/her turn to be on duty at the office of the OMELCO to receive complaints or policy suggestions from petitioning citizens.

Chapter 4

General Configurations of the Collective Action Events Concerning Issues of Public Housing Estates

Instances of collective action that occurred between 1980-1995 are recorded and analyzed. Apart from their contribution of delineating the general developmental trends of the public housing movements, the selected cases also function as the units of analysis for the indexes depending on content analysis of newspapers.

The collective action events chosen must satisfy two conditions. They are:

(i) the case must be recorded in newspapers with explicit action form(s); latent action such as "letters to the editor" are not considered;

(ii) the case must bear identifiable and concrete claim(s) or demand(s).

Signature campaigns and surveys are not counted as collective action events here. It was because their launchings were actually one of the preparatory processes for the initiation of a specific collective action event---- they were used to collect mass opinions before the holdings of protests, press conferences, mass meetings and other collective actions; or they were used to enhance the credibility of the demands that were proclaimed during the collective action events. Hence, they should not be counted to avoid the danger of double counting.

In the below sections, attentions are paid on the collective action events that were initiated by resident groups and by the grass-root oriented political parties respectively.

Total Number of the Collective Action Events

The annual number of the collective action events was quite stable from 1980-1990, except for the consecutive years of 1985-1986. An extra-ordinarily high amount of cases were recorded in these two years as the majority of which were responses opposing the Green Paper on Housing Subsidy and the adoption of a new rent policy by the Housing Authority. A mass meeting involving more than 600 tenants has been once held to proclaim against the Green Paper on Public Housing Subsidy, for instance.

On the other hand, a rising trend can be seen from 1991-1995 (except 1992 with a slight drop of three instances). In addition, this period was characterized by a high annual number of cases. These last five years, altogether, accounted for 58% of the total number of collective action events.

Figure 1. Total Number of the Collective Action Events

Year	Number of Cases	Percentage
80	7	3.8%
81	1	0.5%
82	5	2.7%
83	6	3.3%
84	4	2.2%
85	17	9.3%
86	21	11.5%
87	6	3.3%
88	3	1.6%
89	2	1.1%
90	6	3.3%
91	16	8.8%
92	13	7.1%
93	20	11%
94	26	14.3%
95	29	15.9%
Total	182	100%

Note. Combined by the author from newspapers clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

Number of the Collective Action Events Initiated by Resident Groups

Even events involving political parties and their joint action with resident groups are not counted (these action types emerged just from 1991), similar trends like the ones above are observed. These mean that there was a stable increase from 1991-1995; more significantly, during this period, the number of cases per year was higher than the annual number of cases from 1980-1990 (not including 1985, 1986 and 1992). These last five years, when put together, occupied more than one-third of the total amount within the period of study (36.7%). In 1991, nine instances of press conferences were recorded, for example. In one of the instances, opinions about the sale of public housing units were expressed.

Figure 2. Number of the Collective Action Events Initiated by Resident Groups

Year	Number of Cases	Percentage
80	7	4.8%
81	1	0.7%
82	5	3.4%
83	6	4.1%
84	4	2.8%
85	17	11.7%
86	21	14.5%
87	6	2.1%
88	3	1.6%
89	2	1.1%
90	6	3.3%

91	14	7.7%
92	7	3.8%
93	10	5.5%
94	15	8.2%
95	21	11.5%
Total	145	100%

Note. Combined by the author from newspapers clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

Number of the Collective Action Events Involving Joint Action by Resident Groups and Political Parties

This category of action only occupied a small portion. Only seven instances are recorded within the period. Besides, a declining trend can be revealed. The annual number of occurrence dropped from three to one cases from 1992-1993. In 1992, for example, a political party and a resident group joined together to protest against the double-rent policy by staging a sit-in outside the Housing Authority[2].

Figure 3. Number of the Collective Action Events Involving Joint Action by Political Parties and Resident Groups

Year	Number of Cases	Percentage
92	3	42.9%
93	2	28.6%
94	1	14.3%
95	1	14.3%
Total	7	100%

Note. Combined by the author from newspapers clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

Number of Collective Action Events Initiated by the Political Parties

Here appeared a slightly rising trend (except the year of 1994 with a slight drop of 3 instances). However, it should be noted that the political parties had fewer proclivities to engage in collective action as resident groups did. Not more than four cases were recorded each year. In 1991, a mass demonstration was organized by a political party, in which more than 400 tenants from 20 housing estates participated.

Figure 4 Number of Collective Action Events Initiated by Political Parties

Year	Number of Cases	Percentage
91	2	8%
92		
93	6	24%
94	10	40%
95	7	28%
Total	25	100%

Note. Combined by the author from newspapers clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

Collective Action Events Initiated by Resident Groups---Cadre-Oriented or Mass-Oriented

It was ratified in the Public Order Amendment 1980 Ordinance that processions involving less than 20 participants were not required to license. Accordingly, cadre-oriented collective action events are defined as those events that involved not more than 20 participants while mass-oriented collective action

events referred to as those that possessed more than 20 participants. Cases like closed-door meetings and press conference were usually cadre-oriented while cases like protest and mass rally were usually mass-oriented (but this was not necessarily the case). More significantly, what this distinction implies is the mobilization capacity of the organization(s) that held the event. It can be inferred that events that were mass-oriented requiring greater mobilization effort and thus, higher mobilization capacity.[3]

The collective action events that were initiated by resident groups had an obvious trend of being cadre-oriented, with the exception of the years of 1980, 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1992. In 1994, for example, eleven of the cases involved less than 20 participants while only four of them involved more than 20 participants.

Figure 5 Collective Actions Initiated by Resident Groups---Cadre-Oriented (CO) or Mass-Oriented (MO)

Year	Number of CO	Number of MO	Total Number
80	2(29%)	5(71%)	7(100%)
81	1(100%)		1(100%)
82	4(80%)	1(20%)	5(100%)
83	5(83%)	1(17%)	6(100%)
84	2(50%)	2(50%)	4(100%)
85	5(29%)	12(71%)	17(100%)
86	9(43%)	12(57%)	21(100%)
87	4(67%)	2(33%)	6(100%)
88	2(67%)	1(33%)	3(100%)
89	3(100%)		3(100%)
90	5(83%)	1(17%)	6(100%)
91	10(71%)	4(29%)	14(100%)
92	5(50%)	5(50%)	10(100%)
93	9(69%)	3(31%)	12(100%)
94	11(73%)	4(27%)	15(100%)
95	12(57%)	9(43%)	21(100%)

Note. Combined by the author from newspapers clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

Collective Action Events Initiated by Political Parties---Cadre-Oriented or Mass-Oriented

The collective action events initiated by the political parties were dominated by those of cadre-oriented. They were more likely to initiate cadre-oriented action than resident groups. Except for the year of 1991 (it actually had a total of two events, one was cadre-oriented and another was mass-oriented), the annual percentage of the mass-oriented event never exceeded 30 %. In 1993, for example, a closed door meeting with the chairperson was held to discuss the financial arrangement of the Housing Authority.

Figure 6 Collective Actions Initiated by Political Parties---Cadre-Oriented (CO) or Mass-Oriented (MO)

Year	Number of CO	Number of MO	Total Number
91	1(50%)	1(50%)	2(100%)
92			
93	5(83%)	1(17%)	6(100%)
94	8(80%)	2(20%)	10(100%)
95	5(71%)	2(29%)	7(100%)

Note. Combined by the author from newspapers clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

Collective Action Events Initiated by Resident Groups---Institutionalized or Non-Institutionalized

As stated in the previous chapter, non-institutionalized actions referred to

those action modes of which demands were not expressed through formal channels of grievances redressed. The fact that which type of collective action was dominant not only reflected the average attitudes of the movement organizations towards the formal political system, but also whether their legitimacy was confirmed by the state.

Resident groups were more likely to employ non-institutionalized modes of collective action. Only in the years of 1980, 1981, 1982, 1987 and 1988 did the number of institutionalized collective action outnumbered those of non-institutionalized. In the 90's, three cases involving direct confrontations with the police were recorded, which will be stated in chapter four.

Figure 7. Collective Actions Initiated by Resident Groups--- Institutionalized (I) or Non-Institutionalized (NI)

Year	No. of I Action	No. of NI Action	Total No.
80	7(100%)		7(100%)
81	1(100%)		1(100%)
2	3(60%)	2(40%)	5(100%)
83	1(20%)	4(80%)	5(100%)
84		4(100%)	4(100%)
85	2(12%)	15(88%)	17(100%)
86	6(29%)	15(71%)	21(100%)
87	4(67%)	2(33%)	6(100%)
88	2(67%)	1(33%)	3(100%)
89	1(50%)	1(50%)	2(100%)
90	1(17%)	5(83%)	6(100%)
91	1(7%)	13(93%)	14(100%)
92	1(10%)	9(90%)	10(100%)
93	(25%)	9(75%)	12(100%)
94	(33%)	10(67%)	15(100%)
95	(19%)	17(81%)	21(100%)

Note. Combined by the author from newspapers clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

Collective Action Events Initiated by Political Parties---Institutionalized or Non-Institutionalized

Contrary to resident groups, the political parties were more inclined to engage in institutionalized modes of collective action. In 1995, four cases concerned about closed-door discussions with representatives from the Housing Authority and relevant government officials, were recorded, and one of them opposed about the income and property surveillance of tenants. Another of them concerned about fastening the pace of redevelopment.

Figure 8. Collective Actions Initiated by the Political Parties---Institutionalized (I) or Non-Institutionalized (NI)

Year	No. of I Action	No. of NI Action	Total No.
91		2(100%)	2(100%)
92			
93	3(50%)	3(50%)	6(100%)
94	5(50%)	5(50%)	10(100%)
95	4(57%)	3(43%)	7(100%)

Note. Combined by the author from newspapers clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

Implications of the Configurations

A general understanding of the territory's public housing movement is accorded by the various trends delineated above. More significantly, such trends also provide implications for further analysis.

Figure 1 shows that there was the flourish of the collective action events from 1991-1995. In addition, contrary to the commonly held belief or some literature (e.g., Kwok, 1992), the public housing movement or resident-group

activities, during the same period, were far from declining as expressed in the annual and the total number of the collective action events shown in figure 2.

Another striking implication from the figures 2 and 3 is that in terms of the amount of the instances initiated, it seems that the proliferation of political parties has not posed any severe threat to the movement organizations or resident groups. It was because political parties tended to show less eagerness in initiating collective actions.

In the following chapters, the research will explain that the various dimensions of the political opportunities structure helped to account for the rising trend of collective actions from 1991-1995 and the relatively large annual number of cases during the same period. It will also demonstrate that the political opportunities structure facilitated the launchings of collective action concerning public-housing issues in general, but not favoured the initiations of mass-oriented collective action by the public housing movement in particular.

Notes

1 It should be cautious that not all the instances of collective action were initiated by the movement organizations. The research has realized this fact when the processes of coding and analysis were implemented.

2 Officially known as the Housing Subsidy Policy, the double-rent policy began to implement in 1987. According to the policy, a double of the original rent must be paid by households whose income exceed twice of the income limit specified in the public-housing waiting list. It is expected that tenant having to pay the double rent (they are classified as "well-off households") will move out of their rental units and thus, shortened the average time of waiting for those on the waiting list.

3. Implied by this distinction is the proposition that, part from the difference in the size of participants, in a cadre-oriented event, only organizers and staff of a movement organization(s) were involved; on the other hand, in a mass-oriented event, not just the above people but other affected individuals would also cast their participation. Albeit this proposition cannot be verified by the news report, it was confirmed by our interviewees as the typical situation.

Chapter 5

The Hong Kong Government's Propensity of Repression

The Public Order (Amendment) Bill to loosen control over assemblies and processions was finally passed by the Legislative Council on 19th July, 1995. However, owing to its late passage, the ordinance has exerted almost no influence even in the year of 1995.[1] Therefore, it can be said that there was no substantial relaxation of the Public Order Ordinance before or during 1991-1995 to account for the period's large amount of collective action events. Nevertheless, it can still be seen that during the entire period of study (1980-1995), the attitude of the government as revealed from the Public Order (Amendment) Ordinance 1980 and the police handling of the protest events, though not explicitly encouraged the employment of non-institutionalized collective action, only act as a minor hindrance when people found it necessary to voice out their demands by this mean. In other words, the initiations of collective action events were facilitated by such attitude of the government.

The attitude of the Hong Kong Government towards non-institutionalized collective action was not characterized by a high propensity of repression. Instead, its position, although not lenient, could be defined as tolerant -----the right of assembly was not throttled but recognized though there has been the Public Order Ordinance; only a few of the instances resulted in police intervention and no severe degree of force was employed.

In the sections below, the research will explain the reason for adopting the tolerant attitude from a historical perspective. Then the rationale of the Hong

Kong Government behind the Public Order (Amendment) 1980 Ordinance will be analyzed. After that, the gradual alteration and the content of the ordinance will be elaborated, following by discussions of the police handling of non-institutionalized collective events. Their impacts will then be analyzed and it can be seen that the attitude did help to shape the action repertoire.

Reason for Employing a Tolerant Attitude from a Historical Perspective

The tolerant attitude of the government can be perceived as one of the official tactics "to cope with ever-increasing politicalized life of urban dwellers" (King, 1984:137), that can be traced back to the implementation of the City District Officer Scheme since the late 60's.

As stated by King (1984), owing to the large-scale riot in 1967, a City District Officer was assigned to each urban district from 1968 onwards. The main function of whom was to abridge the gap between the government and the grass-root. Meetings were held by the City District Officer to consult with various representatives of the district, for example, hawkers and taxi-drivers.

With regard to the Public Order Ordinance, it was originally designated to restrict public assembly after the 1967 Riot. As will be soon revealed in the chapter, several housing conflicts in the late 70's such as the Yaumatai Boat People Incident[3], precipitated its amendment in 1980. Nevertheless, by the time of its amendment in 1980, the right of assembly was confirmed and proclaimed by the government, which will be shown in the below section.

Rationale of the Government

The Public Order (Amendment) Ordinance 1980 and the manifested police handling of the protest actions, actually reflected the government's position towards non-institutionalized collective action particularly public meetings and processions. Undoubtedly, a cautious attitude emphasizing on public security has been employed by the government, that was made explicit in a statement addressing the amendments of the Public Order Ordinance by the Attorney General:

> Also to bear in mind that although Hong Kong today is stable, and its population, with very few exceptions, responsible, it was not always so; and--- who knows --- in the future issues unforeseen by any of us today may arise which could lead to the expression of strongly opposing views....who hold strong controversial views may, through misguided enthusiasm....through malice, attempt to insist upon the expression of their views in places and at times when to do so may risk or even be actually designed to cause unrest. (Legco Proceeding, 1979-80: 1064-1065)

However, in the same speech, the right of assembly was ratified as well:

> in Hong Kong, as in every other community where the rule of law applies, citizens must be allowed to exercise the right to express publicly their views on matters of public interest.....of public controversy. They must be able to associate together freely to discuss those views. (Legco Proceeding, 1979-80: 1064)

Therefore, behind the restrictively tolerant attitude, was the attempt to find reconciliation between public security and order, and the right to assembly:

> a fair balance between those competing rights.....opinions may be freely

expressed and public pressure brought on governments and others, but only in an orderly manner and at the same time without inconvenience to or disrupting one's neighbour's life. (Legco Proceeding, 1979-80: 1064)

Gradual Alteration of the Public Order Ordinance

In 1967, the Public Order Bill was put forward, which was justified as a necessary response to the large scale riot happen in the preceding months. Hence, the notion of preventing and controlling disorder was emphasized. But at the same time, no reference to the right of the public to dissent or express their opinions by means of peaceful assembly was made (Mushkat, 1992).

In essence, the 1967 Ordinance endorsed wide power to the relevant executive organs. The Commissioner of Police was granted the authority to prohibit the holding or continuance of any public gathering in any particular area or premises or on particular day if he considered it necessary or expedient in the interests of public order to so (section15). The Governor in Council was provided with the power to ban all public gatherings for up to three months if he considered it necessary to do so in order to prevent serious public disorder (section 16). A police officer of or above the rank of inspector was authorized to prevent the holding of, stop or disperse, or vary the place or route of any public meeting, public procession, or public gathering other than meetings exclusively for religious purposes (section 3). All police officers of any ranks were given the power to prevent the holding of, and to stop or disperse an unlicensed public meeting or public procession (section 11).

The Public Order Ordinance 1967 also expanded the scope of unlawful

assembly and riot. If three or more persons assembled together conducted themselves in a manner intended or likely to cause anybody reasonably to fear a breach of the peace, regardless of whether they shared a common purpose, they would constitute an unlawful assembly (section 18). An unlawful assembly would amount to a riot as soon as any party present committed a breach of the peace (section 19).

In 1970, the Public Order (Amendment) Ordinance was passed in the Legislative Council with the "recognition that some of the provisions of the ordinance confer unnecessarily wide powers in ordinary times and that, in a few instances, there may be a risk that innocent persons may be involved in offences" (LegCo. Proceeding. 1970-71:334).

With regard to the amendments, the most significant of which were to narrow the ambit of the ordinance's application. The term, meeting, was redefined to include any meetings in which a degree of organization was involved. A causal gathering of persons in a public space was excluded and was exempted to obtain a license. Exemptions are also made to creditors' meetings, sittings of court, funeral meetings, and meetings held for business or social purposes in licensed restaurants. Besides, the power of police officers to prevent the holding, stopping, and dispersing of public meetings (section 11) was also restricted, as well as the powers to prohibit the public display of banners and flags (section 3) to occasions where these could be believed to be necessary.

The liabilities and offences under the ordinance were also to be circumscribed. The obligation imposed on the licensee to be present from the first assembly of its meeting to its final dispersal was amended to enable him the

defense of absence by reason of illness or other unavoidable cause. Similarly, a person responsible for the organization, promotion, direction, or management of a meeting which was prohibited by the Commissioner of Police under section 15 would, under the new provision, be guilty of an offence only after the issue of the prohibition order. The plea of reasonable excuse was extended to persons charged with an offensive weapon in their possession at a public meeting or procession (section 14). The most important of all were the amendments of the offences of unlawful assembly (section 18) and riot (section 19), requiring a disorderly, intimidating, insulting, or provocative element in the conduct of an assembly before it became unlawful.

In 1979, as a result of several events like the "Yaumatai Boat People Incident" in which the government was criticized of severely constraining the freedom of assembly, a working party was established to make recommendations on the laws that were related to the licensing and controlling of public meetings and processions. Eventually, the Public Order (Amendment) Ordinance 1980 were enforced. As stated by Mushukat (1982), the 1980 ordinance aimed at replacing the established licensing procedures pertainning to public assembly with a simplified system of police notification. Until 19th July, 1995, no substantial changes on the laws regarding public meetings and processions have been implemented.

Content of the Public Order (Amendment) Ordinance 1980

Three majors means have been adopted to regulate the right of public assembly. According to Mushukat (1992), they can be categorized as "prior

restraint", "subsequent punishment" and "dispersal powers". The first one, on the other hand, consisted of three measures, i.e., licensing, notification and banning orders.

Licensing

Public processions consisting of more than 20 persons and taking place on public highways, public thoroughfares, or public parks must be authorized by a license issued in writing by the Commissioner of Police (section 13). The license--- once given --- was subject to such conditions relating to the forming, conduct, route, times of passing and dispersal of the procession as the Commissioner of Police might impose, as well as a general condition that the licensee be present at the public procession from the first assembly thereof to the final dispersal thereof in order to ensure the due performance and compliance with the conditions of the license and the maintenance of public order throughout the period of assembly, conduct, and dispersal of the public procession (section 15).

A right of appeal to the Governor was granted to an aggrieved person whose application for a license is rejected or whose license was cancelled or amended (section 16).

Notification

Public meetings which involved or expected to involve more than 30 people in a public place or more than 200 people in private premises, excluding, however, meetings held in school or accredited educational establishments with

the consent of the management, were required to notify the Commissioner of Police seven working days in advance (section 7). The Commissioner of Police was granted the power to prohibit intended meetings notice of which has been given (section 9). The right of appeal to the Governor to rescind the prohibition order was provided (section 16).

Banning Orders

A general ban on all, or a class, of public gatherings in the territory for a period not exceeding three months might be imposed by the Governor in Council if he was satisfied that by reason of particular circumstances existing in Hong Kong or in any part thereof, it was necessary for the prevention of serious public disorder (section 17E). The Commissioner of Police was empowered to place a specific ban on public gatherings if it appeared to him to be necessary or expedient in the interests of public order so to do and regardless of whether the gathering was disorderly or violent (section 17D).

Subsequent Punishment

A person who without lawful authority at any public gathering made any statement or behaved in a manner which was intended or which he knew or ought to know was likely to incite or induce any person to engage in acts of violence was subject to prosecution (section 26). More disruptive forms of assembly were dealt with by invoking the offence of riot (section 19).

Dispersal Powers

Dispersal powers have been conferred upon police officers (in the case of both lawful and unlawful gatherings) if they reasonably believed that such activities were likely to cause or lead to a breach of the peace (section 17). To facilitate the enforcement of dispersal orders, police officer might use such force as might be reasonably necessary to enter any premises in which persons were gathered to close specific places to the public (section 17). Failure to comply with dispersal orders was a criminal offence which was severely penalized (section 17A).

Police Handling of the Collective Action Events

A study of how the police have handled the collective action events was important because it reflected the actual implementation of the ordinance. Of the total 182 collective action events related to issues of public housing estates, only three of them had the sending of the Police Force to stop the activities of the participants, which occurred in 1991, 1992 and 1993 respectively.[2] Force was employed by the police in the 1993 case while in the others, the participants dismissed peacefully.

The three cases, superficially, seem to reveal that the government has employed a more repressive attitude in the 1990's. However, it is more accurate to say that no such kind of police interference occurred previously (from 1980-1990) because the cases during this period did not involve the adoption of the "blockage tactics" like the three cases. Hence, instead of representing rollbacks to repression, the three cases reveal how instances entailing

"comparatively radical means" were tackled by the police. Because of their particularities, they will be briefly stated while the last one will receive more thorough analysis.

Case 1---- 26th September, 1991

During the first open meeting of the Housing Authority, several representatives of a resident group hanged a banner from the second floor of the public gallery denouncing the double-rent policy. The banner was eventually grabbed by the security. The protesters then left the chamber where the meeting was held. At the same time, another group of about 100 residents was watching the meeting broadcast in a lecture hall, who then tried to go out to meet with the leaving protesters. But the door in the hall was locked and they were separated with the protesters. There were shouts and loud screams from the lecture hall. Police were called in to stance guard. Finally, the residents left after members of the Housing Authority agreed to meet them.

Case 2--- 25th June, 1992

There was a gathering of residents outside the headquarters of the Housing Authority to oppose its decision on rent increase. Police were called there after receiving report from the security that a group of people was attempting to "storm" the building. When the police arrived, some protesters complained that the guards refrained them from taking food and water to their representatives who had remained inside after meeting with the authority's officials. The protesters were later allowed to take food and water to their counterparts by the

police. In the morning after, the protesters left while those inside the headquarters used the "ox-walk" delay tactic to leave.

Case 3--- 25th March, 1993

About 150 tenants from 15 estates petitioned to the Government House to demand the abolition of the double-rent policy. They carried a pig's head and effigies of authority members after arriving at Upper Albert Road at about 1 p.m.. Police wanted the protesters to approach the East Gate behind the Government House, but were refused by them and they sat in the road. Some tenants eventually gave up. When 23 of them continued the sitting, the first official warning was issued at 5.15pm by the police, informing the protesters their assembly was illegal and they should leave in five minutes or face police action. Five minutes after the second warning at 5.55p.m., 30 police officers surrounded the protesters and escorted them to police trucks. There was no strong resistance and the Upper Albert Road was re-opened soon.

In an earlier time, about 300 tenants had blocked a south-bound lane of Fat Kwong Street in order to hold a mock funeral to mourn the "low-rent policy". About 20 of them were able to force their way into the ground floor lobby of the headquarters building. About 30 police tactical unit officers were called to mediate the situation and to stop the protesters from going up to the chamber on the 10th floor. The protesters finally dismissed.

Even repression by the police was resulted, the case that happened outside the Government House shows that their tactics towards the protesters were rather tolerant, soft and legal. It was because, with regard to the timing of repression,

the police took action five hours after the protesters began to besiege the Government House and two warnings were given before the action. Besides, the degree of force used was mild as the protesters were only escorted to waiting rucks by the police.

Impacts on the Collective Action Events

The tolerant position of the Hong Kong Government on citizens right of assembly as elaborated above, though not explicitly encouraged, did facilitate the use of collective action especially those non-institutionalized ones, as a problem solving strategy. In the following, it will be shown that the police had a high propensity of granting permissions to public meetings and processions. Besides, the confidence of the participants were unintentionally enhanced. Most significantly, the ordinance paved for a variety of collective actions to be held without official permission. In addition, the position of the government also influenced the action repertoire.

Police's Propensity of Granting Permissions

It was true that public meetings and processions exceeding 30 (200 in private premises) and 20 participants respectively were required by the ordinance to obtain permissions from the police. Such requirements have been criticized as inhibiting the freedom of expression and discouraging the use of non-institutionalized channels to exercise one's voice (Mushukat, 1992). But the crux was that the police have shown a high propensity to grant permissions to the two types of actions, which undeniably, rarely act as a deterrent when someone

found it necessary to do so. With regard to the absolute number (figure 9), no more than five applications was rejected annually from 1984-1990. Except for the year of 1984 in which 13% of the applications for processions was disallowed, not more than 4% were refused annually in both the categories of public meetings and processions (figure 10). An interviewee put his point frankly:

> We would still organize public meetings or processions when we found the problem unbearable despite of the regulations (the licensing and notification requirements). We would apply to the police whenever obliged, and in the majority of cases, we got the permissions. There is nothing to be fear of.

Figure 9. Applications for Public Meetings and Processions

Applications	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Public Meetings	38	108	82	92	176	207	365
Disallowed	1	2	1	3	3	2	4
Processions	31	83	169	172	199	290	272
Disallowed	4	1	4	2	5	3	4

Note. South China Morning Post, 17 March 1991.

Figure 10. Applications for Public Meetings and Processions in %

Applications	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Public Meetings	38	108	82	92	176	207	365
Disallowed	2.6%	1.9%	1.2%	3.3%	1.7%	1%	1.1%
Processions	31	83	169	172	199	290	272
Disallowed	13%	1.2%	2.4%	1.2%	2.5%	1%	1.5%

Note. Caculated by the author from South China Morning Post, 17 March 1991.

The Confidence of the Participants

The licensing and notification requirements of the Public Order (Amendment) Ordinance 1980 facilitated the employment of collective action in an unintentional way. The requirements, rather being big hindrances, gave a sense of legal legitimacy to the organizers or the participants. An interviewee said:

> We did worry little that our action would result in any persecutions because we found it really necessary to voice out our demands---the problems were simply intolerable, and partly because we got permission from the police; our action was legal. Therefore, there was no need for us to be scared.

Similarly, their confidence was enhanced by the relatively restraining style of the police towards protest action. From the previous analysis, it can be seen that police repression was characterized by quite soft and tolerant tactics. In the case analysis, except for the three cases discussed, one cannot found any noticeable coursal interference by the police in the other instances. Another interviewee commented:

> Apart from things such as the route of procession, the police seldom interfered us in our course of action. Even we saw that police repression was resulted in some cases; they were treated by civilized means like bringing to court. This helped us to reduce our anxiety by making us to believe that even we were arrested, we would be treated by some civilized means.

Paving the Way for Other Types of Collective Action

The Public Order (Amendment) Ordinance 1980 was conducive for a variety of collective actions to be held without government permission. Public

meetings and processions below 30 (200 in private premises) and 20 participants respectively were not required to be officially permitted, which enabled the movement organizations to be more flexible and made quicker responses to housing policies and problems. Within the cases of the research, these action types range from press conference to petition. They occupy 80 out of the total 182 collective action events (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Number of Non-Institutionalized Collective Action Events Not Required to have Permissions

Year	Number of Cases
80	2
81	1
82	4
83	4
84	3
85	5
86	7
87	2
88	2
89	1
90	6
91	9
92	3
93	10
94	10
95	11
Total	80

Note. Combined by the author from newspaper clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

The Influence of Peaceful Tactics

Undoubtedly, the low propensity of repression by the government was also influenced by the relatively peaceful tactics that were used by public housing tenants when voicing their demands. However, it should be cautious that such causal relationship is not irrefutable. The research of Porta (1996) on protest policing in Germany and Italy demonstrated that even severe degree of repression could be resulted from the peaceful exercise of the right of assembly. Hence, it is the government's attitude that is more decisive in understanding whether violent confrontation will happen, and the level of force involved.

Covert Forms of Repression

Undeniably, more covert forms of repression existed. Once there was the existence of a Special Committee on Pressure Group that concerned with monitoring the activities of certain groups critical of government policy such as the Hong Kong Observers. The committee was disbanded only after severe criticisms in 1983 (see Miners, 1995:194, for a more complete account). Even one of the interviewees admitted that in the earlier period, officers of the Special Duty Branch would visit some organizers' homes. Their wives were asked not to let their husbands to "do so many things".

However, it was the presence of overt forms of suppression that was more crucial in determining the mobilizations of the collective action, than the existence of covert threats like the ones stated above. It was because the latter forms of threat were more selective and could only reach a small fraction of the people. More importantly, they could not ripped those lawful assemblies of

their legal legitimacy---- people would still regard their action as within the law, and little need to be anxious of being persecuted even though someone told them to be more reticent. Hence, despite of the presence of such 'invisible' threats, the restrictively tolerant position of the Hong Kong Government served to facilitate the adoption of collective action particularly those that were non-institutionalized.

Impact On the Action Repertoire

The analysis shows that associated with the government's low propensity of repression was the presence of quite moderate and peaceful forms of collective action. This phenomenon tends to support the hypotheses by Porta (1996), which say that a more tolerant, selective, and softer behaviour favours protest while more repressive, diffuse, and hard techniques of policing tend to, at the same time, discourage the mass and peaceful protest while fueling the more radical fringe. Similarly, in the Hong Kong context, the fact that the movement participants found it unnecessary to engage in more radical action, to a certain extent, was due to the restrictively tolerant position of the government. In this way, not only did the government's position on citizens right of assembly facilitated the employment of collective action if needed, it also exerted influence on the action repertoire.

Conclusion

The research possesses no evidence to say that there was any substantial relaxation in the Public Order (Amendment) Ordinance 1980 and the police

handling of the collective action events to account specifically for the large amount of cases from 1991-1995. Nevertheless, what the research has just revealed was that during the entire period of study (1980-1995), the tolerant attitude of the government, as revealed from the Public Order (Amendment) Ordinance 1980 and the police handling of protest events, though not explicitly encouraged the employment of non-institutionalized collective action, only act as a minor hindrance when people found it necessary to voice out their demands by this mean.

In the next chapter, it will argue that the phenomena from 1991 to 1995, to a large extent, was the results of the retreat of resident groups from the formal institution and their reactions towards the still closed Housing Authority.

Notes

1. Only three collective action events concerning issues of public housing estates were recorded after the enforcement of the ordinance in 1995. Despite of its late passage, it is still worth mentioning the background and the content of the ordinance.

The Public Order (Amendment) Ordinance 1995 was a response to the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance that came into force on 8th June, 1991, in which the "right of Assembly" was ratified in Article 17. It states that :

> The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (order public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Since section 3 of the Bill of Rights Ordinance requires pre-existing legislation to be structured consistently with the provisions of the Bill of Rights, the Public Order (Amendment) Bill 1994 was put to the Legislative Council and was passed by the council in 1995 after scrutiny. The main amendments are of twofold. The limit on the number of participants taking part in processions and public meetings without notification is raised from 20 to 30, and from 30 to 50 respectively. The establishment of an independent appeal board, chaired a retired judicial official, to hear appeals against decisions by the Commissioner of Police relating to processions and public meetings.

2 It is/was not unusual for the police to appear in certain kinds of collective action such as procession, to control the traffic, etc. The research will focus

only on instances in which the police were called to stop the ongoing activities of the participants to maintain order.

3 In 1977, the Tanka people (the natives of Hong Kong who were traditionally engaged in fishing) living in the Yau Me Tai typhoon shelter demanded resettlement on land. They were assisted by some social workers and tertiary students. Numerous petitions were organized. Some petitioners were arrested by the police. The government was condemned of its way of handling the incident as constraining the freedom of peaceful assembly.

Chapter 6

Formal and Informal Access for Participants of the Public Housing Movement

Figures from chapter four show that there was a rising trend of collective action events between 1991-1995. Besides, the period was characterized by a high annual number of cases. If social movements or the various protest actions are really tactical responses to a closed and coerced environment as stated by McAdam (1982), the figures do present a seemingly puzzling phenomenon. It is because in an inclusive political system, i.e., a system that allows more extensive and equal mass political participation, the incentive to engage in collective actions (especially non-institutionalized ones) will be much more reduced as there are now formal ways of expressing concerns to officials, which certainly involve fewer cost. Electing a representative to voice out one's interests, for instance, demands less effort and time than participating in a petition to proclaim the interests. Besides, the former methods are much less likely to be arrested by the police. However, it is revealed in the Hong Kong case that on the one hand, channels of formal access have been much more increased and enlarged than those previously---- not only were the number of directly elected seats being raised in the District Boards and in the Urban and the Regional Councils, but also universal suffrage was introduced to the Legislative Council with its scope extended later. On the other hand, instances of collective action initiated by resident groups, of which the majority were non-institutionalized, was also on the rise. It seems that a more inclusive political

system did not bring about a decrease in collective actions especially those non-institutionalized, as expected.

The opacity of the above phenomenon is ceased with regard to the facts that formal access to the Housing Authority was still lacking and it had a low level of accountability to the public; and albeit participants of the public housing movement could send their representatives to run for elections, they (the representatives) could exert very finite influence over the Housing Authority even they became members of the formal institution. Superficially, there seemed to be a rejuvenation of the public housing movement from 1991-1995.

In this chapter, it will argue that the comparatively large amount of instances of collective action between 1991-1995, to a very large extent, can be interpreted as the outcome of the followings---- the retreat of resident groups from formal institution owing to the disappointment towards the notion of a representative government; and their responses towards the still closed or undemocratic Housing Authority.

Before proceeding to elaborate, the democratization process that started from the local administrative level and the history of resident groups' participation in this process will be delineated first.

The Democratization Process

The notion of a representative government began to develop in the early 80's with the introduction of the District Board Election in 1982. According to Leung (1996), the election actually aimed at including an elected element to accommodate the pressure group activists but retaining a majority of pro-

government appointed members in the composition. Therefore, the implementation of the District Boards scheme was originally another mechanism for the absorption of politics rather than as a preclude to more fundamental political reform. But as a result of the Sino-British negotiations during the early 80's and the Joint Declaration of 1984, the notion of a representative government was now carried out against the background that:

> the colonial government had to arrange for the relinquishing of political power to the indigenous population in preparation for Hong Kong 's post 1997 status as a Special Administrative Region with a high degree of autonomy under the sovereign of China (Leung, 1996:165).

In spite of the process's slow development, undoubtedly, the access for mass political participation has been much more expanded. In the following, the development of the District Boards, the Urban/the Regional Councils and the Legislative Council will be elaborated respectively. It was because they made up the bodies allowing the public including participants of the public housing movement to become members of the formal political structure by the mean of election.

The Development of the District Boards

The District Boards were first established in 1981. Before their formation, the District Advisory Boards and the City District Committees had been set up respectively in the New Territories and the urban area, which consisted entirely of appointed members chosen by the District Officer of each district. Following the 1981 White Paper, District Administration in Hong Kong, the first District Board Election was held in 1982, through which one-third of the board members

were chosen by universal suffrage.[1] It was also scheduled that elections were to be held in every three years. In 1985, the proportion of elected members changed from one-third to two-third. Besides, the number of seats was also doubled. In 1988 and 1991, a few more seats were added. More substantial changes occurred in 1994. According to the electoral reform initiated by the Governor, Chris Patten, all appointed seats in the urban area and the New Territories were abolished except for a few reserving for members of the Heung Yee Kuk. In addition, all board members were to form an electoral college selecting 10 representatives to the Legislative Council.

The Development of the Urban/ the Regional Councils

The Urban Council was first formed in 1936 and some of its members have been elected by limited franchise until the election that was held in 1981. In 1983, it was opened to popular election like the Districts Boards. The urban area was divided into 15 constituencies, each returning one councillors. At the same time, the number of elected seats was raised from 12 to 15, comprising one-half of the totals. In 1986, a similar council, the Regional Council, was established in the New Territories with 12 seats for direct election. In 1989, 10 new seats were added for the District Board members to select their representatives. In the 1995 election, the amount of directly elected seats increased from 15 to 32 for the Urban Council and 12 to 27 for the Regional Councils.

The Development of the Legislative Council

Indirect election was introduced into the Legislative Council only in 1985. Under this election, 12 councillors were elected by and from members of the District Boards, the Urban and the Regional Councils. Another 12 were voted from nine functional constituencies composing of professionals, namely, commercial, industrial, financial, labour, social services, education, legal, medical, and engineers and associated professions. In the 1988 election, two functional constituencies, i.e., accounting and sanitary, were included. Breakthroughs occurred in the 1991 election, in which 18 members were directly elected by universal suffrage from nine geographical constituencies. Further changes took place in the 1995 election as a result of the Governor's reform. Most important of all, the appointment system was abandoned. There were now 20 directly elected seats. Another 10 councillors were chosen from an election committee consisting of members from the 18 District Boards. Nine new functional constituencies chiefly designated for the working people were ratified. They included: primary production, power and construction; textiles and garments; manufacturing; import and export; wholesale and retail; hotels and catering; transport and communication; financing, insurance, real estate and business services; and community, social and personal services.

History of Resident Groups' Participation in the Formal Institution

It can be seen that public housing movement organizations or resident groups have already cast their participation in the inchoate stage of the democratization process as shown in the below figure.[2] The heyday of

participation was in the 1985 District Board Election in which 10 candidates were sent to campaign. However, the number of candidates sponsored was greatly reduced to 3 in the 1988 District Board Election. With regard to the locations of the constituencies, most lied within the Sham Shui Po and the Wong Tai Sin Districts, reflecting the power bases of these organizations. What is most noticeable is that they have no longer sent their representatives since the 1991 District Board Election. The beginning of their retreat from the formal political structure coincided with the beginning of a period that was marked by rising instances of collective action particularly those non-institutionalized ones.

Figure 12. Participation of the Movement Organizations in Elections

Name of the Election	No. of Candidates
82 District Boards Election	1
85 District Boards Election	10
86 Urban/ Regional Councils Election	3
88 District Board Election	3
89 Urban/ Regional Councils Election	0
91 District Boards Election	0
91 Urban/ Regional Councils Election	0
91 Legislative Council Election	0
94 District Boards Election	0
95 Urban/ Regional Councils Election	0

Note. Combined by the author from the Resource Books of Hong Kong Elections, 1982-1994, & 1995 edited by Louie Kin Shuen and Shum Kwok Cheung (1994 and 1995).

The analysis of Tang (1991) offered a brief description of some of the movement candidates that participated in the 1985 District Board Elections. They were young, living with their parents in public housing estates, and upwardly mobile social activists, who focused on massive public housing redevelopment issues and were active in organizing affected tenants. They tended to position themselves as the upwardly mobile, second-generation housing activists who committed to help themselves and their neighbours. Such image was different from the Kaifong and Mutual Aid Committee leaders that were regarded as old and conservative. More significantly, they were adroit in handling the relationship with the mass media and politically significantly bodies.

It should be realized that some of the candidates that were once sent by the movement organizations still have taken an active part in the elections held in the 1990's. The difference was that the majority of them have now cast their participation in the name of a political party. However, rather than representing a through split with their bygone companions, their relationship was one of intricate. A participant of a resident group commented:

> We now seldom allow them to join us for we do not want to be too political. What about cooperation in housing issues? It depends. But most of the tenants now would go to their offices to make complaints but not to us anymore.

A social worker commented about resident groups' participation in the formal institution:

> I cannot see there were any specific strategies underlying their participation. Actually, there was a group of people from resident groups, mostly social

> workers and intellectuals who wanted to campaign in elections probably under the influence of the notion of a representative government. They had certain linkage among themselves. The resident groups ceased to take part in the elections when most of them have gone away to continue their education. For those who stayed, the resident groups did not want to sponsor them anymore for their dissatisfactory performance.

The statement above may explain some of the reason behind resident groups' participation in the formal institution. However, its explanation for the reason of their retreat is not adequate. It should be noted that even though some of the participants have gone while some had far from satisfactory performance, the organizations could have selected other members for participating in elections, particularly the District Board Election in which community experience may be more decisive than educational background, if they really had possessed the intention. It will be argued that it is their disappointment towards the formal institution as the substantial factor leading to their retreat.

Disappointment towards the Formal Institution

The disappointment of resident groups towards the formal institution stemmed from two factors. One was the inability of the elected bodies to exert effectively the power of surveillance over public housing policies. The other was their dissonance towards the logic of electoral politics.

Limitations of the District Boards

It is true that the District Boards have been acting as a medium of popular participation in the management of district affairs. They were consulted by the government about what should be done. But they had no right to give

instructions to government officials and refute government decisions. Their influence on public corporations like the Housing Authority was even less. The truth was that whether their opinions were accepted depend on the considerations of the Housing Authority or the Governor-in-Council. Even most District Boards, for example, have proclaimed against the double-rent policy, the Housing Authority still launched it in 1987. In another instance, a housing official has rejected the demand of the Kwai-Ching District Board to establish a joint-department committee to oversee the redevelopment programme in the area for the reason that there already had had enough channels of communication between the Housing Authority and government departments.

Limitations of the Urban and the Regional Councils

The Urban and the Regional Councils have been the only governing bodies possessing both elected members and the executive power to direct the work of government departments, namely, the Urban and the Regional Services Departments. Nevertheless, due to their limited scope of functions, they were not entitled to deal with and discuss issues of public housing. Given this constraint, it is not hard to understand that participants of the movement were less eager to campaign in the elections of these two councils even in their heyday of political participation (see figure 12). The main duties of the two councils involved the following:

Environment and Public Health

i) the construction and management of markets and abattoirs, the licensing and control of hawkers and offensive trades;

ii) street cleansing, refuse disposal; public conveniences and bath-houses; sewers, drains, and wells;

iii) the licensing and inspection of food premises, the sampling and testing of food and drugs, food poisoning;

iv) district public health; house inspections, the investigation and abatement of nuisances, pest control, malarial control, infectious diseases;

v) the licensing and control of laundries, commercial bath-houses, funeral parlours, and undertakers; the management of cemeteries and crematoria;

Recreation and Culture

i) the management and maintenance of bathing beaches, swimming pools, tennis courts, parks, playgrounds, sports complexes, and stadiums;

ii) the licensing of billiard saloons, bowling alleys, skating rinks, table tennis saloons, and places of public entertainment;

iii) the licensing of places where liquor is sold;

iv) the management of public libraries, museums, art galleries, cultural centres and the City Hall. (Miners, 1995:158)

Limitations of the Legislative Council

The Legislative Council, compared to the District Boards, and the Urban and the Regional Councils, possessed greater power of influence over public housing policies because of its status as the highest body of law-making. The Legislative Council has been able to exert its influence on the Housing Authority by passing the annual budget of the latter (this function was ceased in 1992 when it was able to be financially self-responsible). Besides, members of the council

could also question operations and policies of the authority, which were to be answered by government officials. Moreover, they could initiate motions to express their views or to demand the government to take actions on public housing policies. Despite of these power of surveillance, the Housing Authority had a low level of accountability to the Legislative Council prior or after the former's reorganization. The authority was not obliged to keep the council informed when formulating policies nor was it obliged to discuss new or controversial policies with the council when they were implemented. The minimal power of surveillance was manifested in an instance in which the Housing Panel of the council was denied a review report on the double-rent policy. According to the Director of Housing, the authority's decision was based on the ground that it would not be correct for the report to be made available for discussion by the Legco panel before the authority members had received and studied it.

Another constraint of the Legislative Council was that even information was available, the amount and the nature of the information might also subject to the discretion of government officials or the Housing Authority. In a case about sub-standard housing blocks, the Housing Panel was not accorded with enough information and had to demand for more details of the matter.

Albeit the government has appointed some of the Legco councillors as members of the Housing Authority, they only served in an individual basis, and thus, were unable to monitor the work of the authority in the name of the Legco. In addition, they have been prohibited from disclosing confidential information to the public.

A motion might be carried by the Legco. But it was not necessarily the case that the Housing Authority or the government would change its policies according to the motion. In December, 1992, a motion demanding the abolishment of the double-rent policy was put forward. Albeit it was supported by a marginal vote, the Housing Authority insisted that it was not binding. The controversy was put to an end when the Executive Council gave its support to the Housing Authority. In June, 1993, a motion that urged the Housing Authority to conduct and publish a detailed review of the cleanliness, sanitation and management in public rental and Home Ownership Scheme estates, was carried. However, the move was later condemned by the majority of the authority member as " a political show" and "demoralizing staff spirit".

Also, in June, 1993, another motion calling on the government to allocate more residential sites for private and public housing in order to meet the need of the middle and the lower income group, was carried. But the motion was simply replied by a government official as unnecessary, and that the government understood the public housing need but it had to weight up the importance of commercial land versus residential sites.

Dissonance with the Logic of Electoral Politics

Another factor contributed to resident groups' retreat from the formal institution was their refusal to comply with the logic of electoral politics.

Similar answers were provided by the interviewees when they were asked about the question that why their organizations no longer sent members for elections. An interviewee offered a typical answer:

> The District Boards and the councils were ineffective. Even they (the members) were elected, they could give us just a little more information. However, the cost was bigger than the benefit. Their titles and the parliaments were so attractive that they did not pay any attention to us and to raise the consciousness of the Kaifongs any more.[1]

It is not to deny the existence of unruly behaviours among some of the elected members, which might be crucial in leading to the splits with their movement counterparts. But the statement above also helps to reveal the principles or ideals of the movement organizations. What has been emphasized was the belief of mass participation. According to the belief, the role of the organizer should have concentrated on raising the reflexivity of the mass towards their own situations or problems, but not standing at the front to claim to represent their interests. More significantly, those affected, instead of merely offering their presence, should have been actively and collectively involved and taken part in the course of struggle---- they should have decided their own strategies and demands. It was expected that aside from solving problems or alleviating situations, by undergoing such process, self-development of the participants was achieved.

Contrary to the belief of mass participation, the logic of electoral politics stressed on representation by the elected. The most important element of it was to select representatives, by the mean of elections, whom could act on behalf of their constituents to be responsible for the administration and the checking of the state. Besides, mass mobilization was usually and only needed in times of elections. In addition, constituents were expected to reflect their concerns or problems to the elected representatives, which were in turn, brought to the

parliaments or solved through institutionalized means.

The discrepancies discussed have inevitably aroused conflicts between the elected and their movement companions, leading to the retreat of the movement organizations from formal institution. Conflicts were more likely to occur as the elected members would have lesser time to pay attention to their respective organizations and to their concerns because of the fact that they had to be accountable to other constituents and matters. Furthermore, since the members' legal legitimacy depended on their being elected by the constituents, which in turn, depended on whether the latter consented with their performances, it was simply impossible for them to stay behind or among their movement counterparts to help them to organize like before, for the fear that their effort would not be recognized by the public. Instead, they had to stance at the front and made themselves to be easily noticed, which might made other participants look like their supporters. An organizer commented:

> When they were elected, they changed. The most important of which was that they no longer willed to stance behind or with the mass but stance in front of them to act like "a star". Fairly speaking, it was really difficult for them to stay behind or with the mass to help the latter to organize because most constituents would expect their elected representatives to represent their interests and solve their problems for them. If they always encouraged the Kaifongs to stance out and take action, the Kaifongs would inevitably question, "Given the fact that this fellow always asks us to come out but cannot represent us, why we should elect him/ her?"

Moreover, the elected members were now less likely to participate or help to initiate mass mobilization as the logic of electoral politics demanded that

problems or suggestions should have been reflected by the councillors or the board members through the parliaments. Even mass mobilizations were initiated by them, the action was more probably aimed at arousing the attention of the mass media so as to increase their bargaining power with the government officials. A District Board member said:

> I am still concerned about the same problems as before. But since I am a board member, its very natural for me to discuss them in board meetings. Actually, I haven't changed my stance at all. What have changed may be my ways of handling matters.

In addition, mutual distrust was deepened or caused by the fact that the elected representatives might become hesitate to adopt the standpoints or policy suggestions of their organizations. An elected member explained the reason of hesitation:

> We can get more information and better communication with government officials now. We understand more clearly the standpoints of the government, and what can and cannot be practically achieved.

Such condition of being better informed owing to their legal status have created an unintended dilemma. An interviewee put it frankly:

> I am in a very difficult situation. I know that they (my companions) have demands from me. Being a member of the formal institution, I understand clearly the limits of what can be done and so I understand their demands is most of the time, impossible to achieve. I am put into a dilemma---if I really follow their claims, I can always get their support. However, when I am back into the board meetings, no one will support me because of the impracticability of my suggestions, and finally nothing can be done. Since I

am elected by the mass, I have to be responsible to them and thus, I have to achieve some results at least.

The doubtful attitude of resident groups towards the effectiveness of the formal institution also revealed in their reluctance to come to the OMELCO Office to present their protests or suggestions when changes about public housing policies were involved. As revealed by the figure below, there was only one case in which petition to the OMELCO was involved from 1991-1995. From 1992 onwards, such type of collective action was not found in the case analysis. An organizer commented:

> Why we do not go to the OMELCO anymore? The reason is very simple: we have realized that the Legislative Council cannot influence public housing policies. It is the law-making body but it has never succeeded in stopping any rent increase. Thus, it is simply a waste of time to go there. We will now march directly to the Housing Authority instead to press the members to accept our claims. Even if they do not accept our demands, we can still make them to listen to our voice or complaints. We think this strategy is more effective.

Figure 13. Number of Cases Involving Petition to the OMELCO

Year	Number of Cases
80	
81	1
82	2
83	1
84	
85	
86	6
87	3
88	2

89	1
90	1
91	1
92	
93	
94	
95	

Note. Combined by the author from newspaper clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

The Closed Housing Authority

In spite of its reorganization in 1988, the development of the Housing Authority has lagged behind the democratization process. Its low level of accountability has led to the continual employment of collective action method to voice out demands about issues of public housing, even when formal channels of mass participation have been enlarged. The history and the duties of the authority will be briefly reviewed in the immediate section before analyzing its extent of openness.

A Brief Review of the Housing Authority

A Housing Authority was first established in 1954 to provide better public housing for people who were not squatters and who were in higher income brackets (over $ 400) than those in the resettlement estates. In 1973, in order to implement the Ten-Year Housing Programme, all existing housing agencies including the Resettlement Board were unified into the new Housing Authority. It was headed by the government's Secretary of Housing and ruled by a board of

17 members who were appointed by the Governor. The Housing Department was to become its executive arm. Departmental officers were delegated by the Housing Authority with authority to discharge its general powers and duties under the Housing Ordinance. From 1st April, 1988, the Housing Authority was reorganized to accommodate the Long Term Housing Strategy. The role of the authority has mainly expanded to takeover the responsibilities concerning the Home Ownership Scheme from the government. Change also occurred in the composition of the authority's membership. A non-official member has assumed the chairperson. The number of non-official members, including the chairperson, has raised to 20. New financial arrangements with the government have been implemented as well. Under the new arrangements, the government would inject capital to the authority as permanent government capital, which must be repaid within a certain period at a premium of 5%. Profits generated from non-residential purposes such as rents from shops and car parks have to be shared equally between the government and the authority. The underneath functions have been assigned to the authority by the Housing Ordinance prior and after its reorganization:

i) to liaise with other bodies concerned with other bodies concerned with housing in both the public and private sectors and to advice the Governor on matters affecting housing;

ii) to plan, build and redevelop public housing estates, Home Ownership Scheme courts and temporary housing areas for classes of people determined by the Authority and approved by the Governor;

iii) to manage public housing estates, temporary housing areas, cottage areas and

transit centers;

iv) to manage flatted factories and commercial facilitates in public housing estates and Home Ownership Scheme courts;

v) to dispose of flats produced under the Home Ownership Scheme and to manage Home Ownership courts;

vi) to administer the Home Purchase Loan Scheme;

vii) to act as Government's agent----

to clear land;

to prevent and control squatting;

to plan and to coordinate improvements to squatter areas; and

to plan and to administer the Private Sector Participation Scheme;

viii) to approve the annual estimates of expenditure and revenue for submission to the Governor; and

ix) to approve the Annual Report for submission to the Governor.

(Hong Kong Housing Authority Annual Report 1989/90: 137)

Channels of Opinion and Grievances Redress

The Appeals and the Complaints Committees have existed within the Housing Authority for tenants to redress their grievances. Besides, consultational documents may be published in order to invite public opinions on specific housing policies.[3]

The Appeals Committee was a statutory body established under the Housing Ordinance, the function of which is "to listen to appeals in the case of tenancies which had been terminated by the Housing Authority under section 20 of the

Housing Ordinance" (Hong Kong Housing Authority Annual Report 1984/85: 23).

The Complaints Committee was established in 1988. Its function was to determine what action within existing policies should be taken on the complaint. Its terms of reference included: housing allocation; squatter registration; housing subsidy and other public housing related complaints.

Tenants or participants of the movement could give their opinions on a specific policy after that policy was proclaimed in the form of consultational document. They could send back their suggestions in the form of written proposals to the Housing Authority.

Limitations of the Channels

The three channels were inadequate in pacifying discontents of tenants or participants of the movement. It was because the functions of the two committees are quite confined in scope. They could only handle individual complaints involving maladministration by the authority staff. They were not access for tenants or participants of the movement to express their dissatisfactions towards housing policies or towards problems of territorial nature.

Albeit consultational documents might be published, such kind of consultation tended to be selective by the fact that not every policy was available to public discussion. The Mid Term Review of the Long Term Housing Strategy, for instance, was proclaimed without prior consultation. Even consultation was implemented, it remained an unknown of how the various

suggestions were to be treated, and it showed that sometimes the authority did not employ a serious attitude in seeking public advice. The Long Term Housing Strategy, for instance, was to be implemented from 1985-2001. But its consultational document was distributed only in 1987. The Home- Purchase Scheme was ratified before the deadline of the consultational period (see Hong Kong Economic Journal, 2nd May, 1987).

In other words, what has been lacking in the Housing Authority was a scheme in which members of the authority would meet the public regularly to hear their concerns.

Beside with the above inadequacies, discontent towards the Housing Authority has also been intensified by the appointment system that obviously has little transparency, which has been perceived as lagging behind the democratization context and has been only representing the interests of the capitalists but not those of housing tenants or the grass-root.

Composition of the Authority's Members

Open access for tenants or others to enter into the formal structure of the authority has been simply lacking despite of its reorganization in 1988. All non-official members have been appointed by the Governor, like other advisory committees, for example, the Transport Advisory Committee. In addition, the criteria of selection have not been made explicit. It remained an unknown of how and why the members were chosen. As seen from figure 14, the majority of them came from professional and business sectors. What was obvious was a low level of representation from public housing tenants and resident groups albeit

they were directly and substantially affected by decisions of the Housing Authority. Even after the first direct election of the Legislative Council in 1991, there were only two members who were directly elected from geographical constituencies. In spite of the statutory power of the authority, all its members have been sitting in an individual capacity.

Figure 14. Background of the Non-Official Members of the Housing Authority

Year	Business Sectors	Profession-Als	Tenants	Resident Association Representa-tives	Directly Elected Elected Legco Members
80-81	6	5	1		
81-82	6	5	1		
82-83	7	6	1		
83-84	8	5	1		
84-85	9	4	1		
85-86	7	6	1		
86-87	7	6	1		
87-88	8	10	1		
88-89	8	10	1		
89-90	6	11	1	1	
90-91	6	11	1	1	
91-92	6	11	1	1	2
92-93	6	11	1	1	2
94-95	3	13	1	1	2
95-96	3	13	1	1	2

Note. Combined by the author from the Annual Reports of the Hong Kong Housing Authority 1980-1996.

The appointment system has been praised by the government as capable of

selecting members with a board range of experience and representation, who, together, could apply a critical and conscientious experience in determining public housing policies.

On the contrary, such appointment system has been criticized by some resident groups and movement participants as: lagging behind the pace of democratization; since members were selected on an individual basis by the Governor, they lacked the intention of being accountable to their respective groups and housing tenants, and would act only according to the favour of the government; it was dubious whether members from the business and the professional sectors who possessed close connections with land developers, could keep their vested interests from influencing their decisions. What the movement participants clamoring for was a system in which members were either directly elected or chosen from the elected bodies.

It could not be denied that the appointment system did apply to other statutory corporations such as the Hospital Authority; through which members from different backgrounds were selected into a committee (in some cases, with high-ranking officials) that acts as the highest-level decision making body of the corporation. A specific government department executes the corporation's daily operations, in turn. The fact that the appointment system of the Housing Authority tends to draw more criticisms because it provides shelters for more than 60% of the population and thus, and exerts substantial influence on the livelihood of most of the people in the territory. The centrality of housing issues in people's value system is also reflected.

The inadequacies discussed previously, to a very large extent, have

"justified" the adoption of non-institutionalized collective action as means of clamour especially in issues related to housing policies and large-scale problem. The analysis is best supported by figure 15.

Figure 15. Collective Actions Concerning Policy and Territorial Issues Initiated by Resident Groups

Year	Number of Cases	Annual Total
80	5(71%)	7(100%)
81	1(100%)	1(100%)
82	4(80%)	5(100%)
83	5(83%)	6(100%)
84	2(50%)	4(100%)
85	17(100%)	17(100%)
86	21(100%)	21(100%)
87	5(83%)	6(100%)
88	3(100%)	3(100%)
89	2(100%)	2(100%)
90	6(100%)	6(100%)
91	13(93%)	14(100%)
92	7(100%)	7(100%)
93	9(90%)	10(100%)
94	9(60%)	15(100%)
95	13(62%)	21(100%)

Note. Combined by the author from newspaper clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

Informal Procedures of the Housing Authority

Despite of a dearth of formal channels, the informal procedures used by the Housing Authority towards participants of the public housing movements can be characterized as one of fairly consultative and responsible, manifesting as officials' and members' willingness to engage in dialogue with the latter. Such

characteristics have become more apparent since 1991. The research's case analysis reveals that there were just four cases involving closed-door discussion with representatives from the Housing Authority during 1980-1990, while between 1991-1995, the amount of similar cases rose to 14. In addition, petitioners may demand a particular member to receive their letters. In 1995, the authority tried to appoint a movement participant into its complaint committee but was denied by the latter.

However, the actual effect or strength of such informal facilitation of access should not be overestimated. The Housing Authority has employed an adamant position particularly when rental policy was involved. If only policy or territorial issues were considered, it was found that the authority has partly consented with the demands of resident groups in just three instances, namely, rooftop insulation in 1980; right of inheritance in 1984 and security facilities in 1994.

The informal procedures, in spite of its absence of real effects, do possess certain function as revealed in the beneath words of a movement organizer:

> Although I deprecate such gesture myself, it must be admitted that they sometimes help to reduce the discontent of the Kaifongs. Those with little experience or lower demands may think, "It's quite good at least some of the officials or members are willing to meet us." They felt very appreciated, as it seemed that the Housing Authority showed concern to their problems, even the official they sent was just a housing officer who could promise them little. Besides, another important effect of the gesture is that it helped to make the 'institutionalization of non-institutionalized actions'---- protesting actions have become confined to a few types such as petition to the authority and,

holding press conference and then seeking dialogue with the authority. Most of them do not bother to think of other strategies. On the contrary, we now prefer more direct confrontations to press the authority to accept our claims.

Mobilization Capacity of the Movement Organizations

In spite of the existence of a fecund image between 1991-1995, the organizational strength, or put more precisely, the mobilization capacity, of resident groups should not be overestimated. The rising amount of collective action events and the relatively large annual number of cases during the period do not denote that these organizations were much more strengthen than they were previously. It was because, as shown from the figure of chapter four, a great number of the instances were still cadre-oriented, requiring less manpower to initiate and participate than those of mass-oriented.

The viewpoint is further supported by the underneath figure. Organization X (pseudonym) has once taken an active part in the democratization process by sending members for elections. After its withdrawal from the elections held in 1991, the type of collective action (those about public housing matters) it employed were mostly cadre-oriented, meaning that there were not more than 20 participants in the actions.

Figure 16. Collective Actions Employed by Organization X--- Cadre-Oriented (CO.) or Mass-Oriented (MO.)

Year	Number of CO. Case	Number of MO. Case
91	6(75%)	2(25%)
92	2(67%)	1(33%)
93	1(33%)	2(67%)

94	3(100%)
95	3(100%)

Note. Combined by the author from newspaper clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

Hence, it can be said that organizations of the public housing movement have always possessed very moderate mobilization capacity or organizational strength, tending to be unaltered by their decisions to take part or retreat from the formal institution. However, it should be noticed that even similar action repertoire was used, the meanings or effects attributed to it may have changed under the democratized context. An organizer put it:

> There might be a rise in the quantity of the collective action. But what about the matter of quality? I do not think there was any improvement with regard to it. In the 70's, holding a press conference or petition to the authority was a great deal for people from the Specific Duty Unit would surely keep an eye on you. I cannot find any meaning or effect attributed to them in the 90's when society has become more opened. Such types of action are too trite to make any impacts.

Strong State and Inclusive Dominant Strategy

If the typology of Kriesi (1995) is used to conceptualize the Hong Kong case, it is not difficult to realize that the case here is more resemble to the case in Netherlands than the other three cases in France, Germany and Switzerland. A strong state did exist in the sense that the elected bodies could exert very slight influence on public housing policies, rather than meaning the absence of formal channels for mass political participation. The Housing Authority has enjoyed a

heavy concentration of power and has paid responsibility only to the Governor-in-Council. On the other hand, there has been informal facilitation of access as revealed by the quite responsive and consultative approach of the Housing Authority. There was also similarity in the outcome---a very moderate action repertoire. However, it should be cautious that whether the movement organizations are strongly developed (as the analysis of Kriesi showed), apart from determining by the combination of formal and informal institutional structure, depended on the organizations' respective availability of resources.

Conclusion

The comparatively large amount of instances of collective action between 1991-1995, to a very large extent, was a result of resident groups' retreat from the formal institution. The retreat, on the other hand, was caused by resident groups' disappointment towards the formal institution, which stemmed from the very finite influence of the elected bodies over public housing policies and the dissonance with the logic of electoral politics. However, the organizational strength or mobilization capacity of resident groups should not be overestimated for the revival was more about the quantity of the collective actions rather than the quality--- most of the actions remained as cadre-oriented as the period before; and it remained doubtful of the effect of these non-institutionalized collective actions such as press conference and petitions, in the democratized context. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the public housing movement was far from rejuvenated between 1991-1995.

In the next chapter, the research will explain why the political opportunities

structure did not favour the public housing movement from 1991-1995, especially its initiations of mass-oriented collective action----the opening of the formal institution to accommodate with the democratization process led to the proliferation and the emergency of political parties, some of which have taken away the potential forces of tenant participation from resident groups. In other words, it will demonstrate that the real threat of these political parties to resident groups was not that they competed with the latter to persuade tenants to take part in their struggles, but was that they absorbed the potential forces of tenant mobilization, of which collective grievances were mostly expressed through parliamentary or cadre-oriented actions.

Notes

1 There are several criteria for one to be eligible to vote. He/ She must be over 21 years old. He/ She must live in Hong Kong for seven years. He/ She must register as a voter.

2 The resource books by Louie and Shum (1995, 1996) are used to analyze the organizational backgrounds of the candidates due to their long coverage and completeness. It seems that among the public housing resident groups, only one resident group has sent representatives for elections. Nevertheless, since the resident group has composed mainly of local organizations rather than individuals as members, it can be inferred that candidates having the support of the council should also have the support of their own organizations. It was probably due to the greater publicity of the council that its name was adopted.

3 The Estate Management Advisory Committee was first carried out in eight estates from April, 1995. Due to its late implementation, it can be inferred that the programme has exerted little influence within our period of study.

4 The term, Kaifongs, is a Cantonese idiom. Literally, it means "those living nearby". However, it is usually used to denote public-housing tenants.

Chapter 7

Policy and Strategic Orientations of the Grass-root Oriented Political Parties

The policy and strategic orientations of the grass-root oriented political parties, to some extent, helped to account for the rising trend of collective action events and the comparatively large amount of cases from 1991 to 1995. Among the total of 104 cases during this period, 20 cases were initiated by these political parties while there were seven cases involving their joint-actions with resident groups. All of the struggles like those initiated by the movement organizations, concerned about protecting the rights of tenants, for instance, opposing rent increase.

In the following, the phenomenon of the emergency and the proliferation of political parties will be elaborated first. Then it will analyze why the policy and strategic orientations led to their active involvement into the struggle for tenants' rights. In addition, the kind of challenge posed to the public housing movement or to resident groups, will be stated.

The Emergency and the Proliferation of Political Parties

According to Miners(1995), two quasi-political groups were formed in the post-war Hong Kong. They were the Reform Club (founded in 1949) and the Civic Association (founded in 1956). Nevertheless, political parties have become more prevalent and influential only since the early 90's.

The United Democrats of Hong Kong was the first political party formed in April, 1990. It consisted mostly of members who came from three

organizations that were formed in the 80's----- the Hong Kong Affairs Society, Meeting Point and, the Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood. Another two parties, i.e., the Hong Kong Democratic Foundation and, the Liberal Democratic Federation were also formed respectively in May and in November 1990. A year after the 1991 elections, the Liberal party was established. The Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong also came into existence in 1992. In May 1994, the Meeting Point and the United Democrats of Hong Kong agreed to merge into a new single party---- the Democratic Party.

There are obvious peculiarities of the party system of Hong Kong when viewed in the light of their western counterparts. Political parties in the territory cannot become the governing party through the capture of political offices by winning elections. Their functions are, through their elected members, to advise, criticize and, block proposals put forward by the government. Besides, the appointment system also makes it possible for some citizens particularly those from business and professional sectors, to acquire political offices without the need to campaign in elections.

Among the various political parties, the Democratic Party is usually classified as a member of the liberal camp with a grass-root orientation. On the other hand, the Liberal Party is considered as a conservative force representing business interests. Albeit the Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood has never proclaimed itself as a political party, it is usually regarded as a political party that acts on the behalf of the grass-root. The Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong is a pro-China party of

which the inauguration was supported by the Xiuhua News Agency.

The Policy Orientation of the Political Parties

The involvement of these grass-root oriented political parties into the struggle for tenants' rights were largely related to their stances on housing policy which, must be admitted that, possessed slight difference with resident groups (see table 2).

Table 2. Stances on Housing Policy of the United Democrats of Hong Kong (UDHK), the Hong Kong Association for Democracy & People's Livelihood (HKADPL), and the Hong Kong People's Council on Public Housing Policies (HKPCPHP)

HKPCP (NOTE 4)	UDHK	HKADPL
1. Government be responsible for public housing as social security	Government be responsible for public housing as social service	Government should provide sufficient rental housing units for economic deprived & poor living environment
2. Government intervention in building housing units to regulate prices of private sector	In developing & utilizing lands, government should consider needs of citizens & regulate prices of private sector	Government to provide sufficient housing for middle & lower class to balance inefficiency of the market
3. Citizen be able to participate in housing policy & monitor	Structure and process of housing policy making be more open & democratic	Strengthen citizen participation in housing policy making to ensure the policy not to violate from need of citizens

Note. From "The Development of Political Parties and the Impact on Community Organizing" by Kwok Ngai Kuen, 1992, Community Resource Book 1991-1992, p34.

Strategic Orientation of the Political Parties

More effort has been put forward by the grass-root orientated political parties to establish their power bases in public housing estates. The Democratic Party and, the Democratic Association for People's Democracy and Livelihood, for example, supported a much larger percentage of members to campaign in constituencies in which the major type of residential area were public housing estates, in the 1994 District Board Election (see figure 17).

Figure 17. Respective Number and Percentage of Candidates Sent by Three Political Parties to Campaign in "Public-Housing-Estate Constituencies" (PHC) and, "Non-Public-Housing-Estate Constituencies" (NPHC)

Political Party	Number & Percentage of to Campaign in PHC	Number & Percentage to Campaign in NPHC
Democratic Party	64 (52%)	59 (48%)
HKADPL	23 (68%)	11 (32%)
Liberal Party	20 (26%)	58 (74%)

Note. Combined by the author from the Resource Books of Hong Kong Elections, 1982-1994, & 1995 edited by Louie Kin Shuen and Shum Kwok Cheung (1994 and 1995).

Their target at public housing tenants as the major patrons was based on the reason that half of the population of Hong Kong has been living in public housing estates. In addition, the comparatively high density of housing blocks

also made it more efficient and effective to mobilize support.

Nevertheless, there was a more substantial cause that not only determined the strategic but also the policy orientations of these parties---- most of their leading members were originally pressure group activists. The majority of pressure groups had existed well before channels for mass political participation were open, and has act as an opposition force to articulate the view of the grass-root to the government (Louie, 1991). Following the inauguration of the District Board in 1981, some of the activists began to cast their participation in the formal institution and to take part actively in the debate concerning the future of Hong Kong. Noticeable examples included Fung Kin Kee who was once the chief secretary of the Hong Kong People's Council on Public Housing Policy and, Lee Wing Tat and his associates who had been working in the Kwai Chung and Tsuen Wan districts.

The above background of these political parties has made them more favourable to compete in constituencies consisting mainly of public housing estates, as compared with parties of business and professional origins. It was because activism by pressure or resident groups in public estates has been a tradition since the 70's, and these parties as a continual of pressure groups, were in fact harvesting the returns long cultivated (Louie, 1991). Besides, the techniques of organizing tenants with which their members were familiar, enhanced their advantage to contest there.

Hence, it is not astounding that resemble tactics or work approach such as surveys, home visits, residents meeting and protests have been employed. The analysis of Kwok (1992:35) demonstrated the close similarities between an

election campaign for a politician and the process model used by a community worker:

Table 3. Similarities between an Election Campaign and the Process Model

STAGES	ELECTION CAMPAIGN	CHARACTERISTICS OF PROCESS INTERVENTION MODEL
Entering	(a) analysis & select constituency (b) seek support from community leaders	(a) analysis of community (b) relationship building
Organizing	(a) formation of campaign team (b) campaigning theme & strategies (c) mobilization of volunteers	(a) establish structure (b) alternatives (c) decision
Implementation	(a) promotion tactics	(a) strategies (b) action
Evaluation	(a) assessment (b) adjustment (c) decision-making	(a) assessment of information
Termination	(a) election day tactics	(a) leaving the community

Note. From "The Development of Political Parties and the Impact on Community Organizing" by Kwok Ngai Kuen, 1992, Community Resource Book 1991-1992, p35.

Other Purposes of Initiating Collective Actions

Revealed by chapter four, political parties have shown less eagerness to resort to collective actions than resident groups. Even this kind of action mode was sought, the collective actions were more cadre-oriented and institutionalized. More importantly, even though collective actions were initiated by the political parties, their underlying intentions were dissimilar with those of the movement organizations. Besides, there was also different perception with regard to the role of tenants.

Non-institutionalized collective actions particularly possessions and petitions were usually regarded as "next-best options" which were used when institutionalized channels failed to produce or were expected to be unable to produce the desired result. A party member said:

> First of all, we will try to arrange a meeting with the relevant department or express our views through the parliaments. We will stage protests only if we find them ignoring our claims. The main function of which is to exert pressure to the government by arousing the attention of the mass media. We do not intend to raise our action level as long as there are signs of responsiveness.

Apart from reflecting policy suggestions or discontents, the initiations of collective action by the political parties serve another purpose---- they prepare party members especially those lacking experience and publicity, ready for elections. It was expected to create an image of diligence and long time participation in community affairs for them. Moreover, techniques of articulating large-scale and community issues were also anticipated to be acquired. An interviewee working in one of the political parties said:

> It is simply impossible to express everything through the parliaments. We have to hold some actions in order to bring other non-elected members to the limelight. They are usually led by one or several Legco Councillors whom we nickname as "big brothers". We do not anticipate these novices to become famous or ready to campaign within a few months. But such type of action is more frequently held, the closer it is to an election.

Beside purpose, the political parties and organizations of the public housing movement differed from each other in their perceptions of the role of tenants in the collective struggle. The previous chapter (chapter seven) stated that resident groups depended on the active participation of the affected tenants in the collective action. Participation was regarded as a continual process of which the aims included not merely solving the problem but also fostering the consciousness of the participants. On the other hand, tenant participation was considered less necessary from the perspective of the political parties. Tenants were expected to count on and to tell problems to their elected representatives whom will do the job for them. A District Board member said:

> We will require them to join us only in very serious issues about which we find the government employs a neglecting attitude.

The variance in perception, apart from stemming from the discrepancy between the logic of mass participation and the logic of electoral politics, as previously explained, were also based on practical considerations. The same interviewee explained:

> We are less inclined to ask tenants to join our actions because we do not want to disturb their daily livelihood. Besides, if you want to persuade them to come out, you will inevitably raise their expectation. Then problems will

arise such as blaming you of incompetence and wasting their time, if the problem cannot be solved. Therefore, we would prefer to do the job ourselves and report to them later by posters or mass meetings.

Another District Board member put it:

Tenants are very realistic. They elect us because they anticipate us to represent their interests. Thus, will they choose us again if we always persuade them to abandon their work and leisure time to come out?

Main Methods Used by the Political Party

It is revealed that the grass-oriented political parties had a greater propensity to raise public-housing issues through parliamentary means. Despite of their minority status in the Legislative Council, a large percentage of inquiries were put forth by them as shown in the below figure.

Figure 18. Percentage and Number of Inquiries Put Forward by Councillors from the Grass-oriented Political Parties

Year	Percentage of Questions Asked	Number
1991-1992	53%	20
1992-1993	53%	16
1993-1994	81%	13
1994-1995	48%	10

Note. Combined by the author from the Legislative Council Proceedings 1991-1995.

Most distinguishable was that these parties have made use of non-official motions to express their views or to call on the government to take certain actions particularly when far-reaching policies were concerned. Seen from the

table below, all except one motion were put forth by councillors from the grass-root oriented political parties. Even the one from Wong Wang Fat was amended by the chairman of the Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood.

Table 4. Motions Concerning Public Housing Putting- Forth by Councillors from the Grass-root Oriented Parties

YEAR	NAME OF THE COUNCILLOR (S)	WORDINGS OF THE MOTION
1991-1992	Lee Wing Tat	That the council urges the Housing Authority to widely consult the public in reviewing the objective, pricing, maintenance, management, and other aspects in connection with the sale of Public housing units to sitting tenants.
1992-1993	Lee Wing Tat	That this council urges the Government to revoke the Housing Subsidy Policy (Double Rent Policy) of the Housing Authority.
1992-1993	Fung Kin Kee	That this council urges the Government to revise its existing financial arrangements with the Hong Kong Housing Authority, including the waiving of payment of interest and dividends and a reduction in the current excessive land development charges in order to allow the Authority to have more resources to introduce environmental improvement measures in public housing estates; and to increase the supply of land for public housing, so that the Authority can build more

		public housing units to meet the pressing demand of the public.
1992-1993	Fung Chi Wood	That in view of the fact that considerable improvement is called for on such matters as law and order, cleanliness, sanitation, and management in public rental and Home Ownership Scheme estates, this council urges the Housing Authority to expeditiously conduct a detailed review of these matters, propose measures for improvement, and publish its findings in a report for public consultation.
1992-1993	Lee Wing Tat	That this Council urges the Government to meet the housing needs of the middle and lower income groups by promptly developing adequate sites for private and public housing, so as to increase the quantity of both private and public housing developments.
1993-1994	Lam Kui Shing (Fung Kin Kee)	This Council urges the Housing Authority, in formulating its recommendations in the Report on Mid- Term Review of the Long Term Housing Strategy, to adopt the public rental housing oriented approach in the provision of public sector housing so as to solve the housing problems of the middle and lower social strata.
1994-1995	Wong Wang Fat (Fung Kin Kee)	That in view of the dire need for public rental housing as evidenced by the fact that 'some 150,000 families are on the Waiting List' and that the Waiting List is still growing, this Council welcome, as a start, the

		Government's 1994 Policy Committee target to 'build an additional 141,000 public rental flats before April 2001', and urges the Government to inject before July 1997 at least an additional 90 hectares of land into the Housing Authority for the construction of public housing in order to satisfy the said need.
1994-1995	Lam Kui Shing (Howard Young) (Fung Kin Kee)	That, in view of the deterioration of the unemployment problem coupled with the rising inflation rate, this Council urges the Government to immediately freeze various fees and charges of Government services, public housing rentals and railways fares for one year in order to alleviate the burden of the general public.

Note. Combined by the author from the Annual Reports of the Legislative Council 1991-1995.

Challenge Posed by the Political Parties

It is evinced that the grass-root oriented political parties have possessed a greater propensity to resort to cadre-oriented and parliamentary actions to voice out tenants' interests, rather than encouraging them to participate actively in a collective struggle (see chapter four). Hence, it can be inferred that what kind of challenge has these political parties' penetrations into public housing estates and public housing issues really posed to resident groups---- they have taken away and incorporated the potential force of tenant participation through their elected members. An organizer of a resident group offered a typical answer:

> Tenants no longer make their complaints to us. It is very strenuous for us to

initiate any action now for not many tenants will take part even very serious issues are involved. Most of them will go to the so-called 'liberal camp' District Board members or councillors for assistance.

The analysis is also supported by some statistical figures. Fung (1993) showed that 38.3 % and 9.5 % respondents would count on District Board members and Legco councillors for assistance respectively when complaining, still 12.8 % would choose pressure groups for help. At the same time, it is more accurately to say that tenants relied on members of these political parties to voice out their demands because of the latter's legal legitimacy, i.e., they were recognized by the government as their representatives, rather than due to the fact that they were party identifiers or held any loyalty to these grass-root oriented parties.

The legal legitimacy acquired through their elected members undeniably, functioned as a competitive advantage. It helped them to make quicker reactions well before resident groups could garner enough tenants or initiate any actions. It was because the elected members could get information in advance by questioning to government departments, or through informal networks built up with officials (Kwok, 1992). This advantage applied not merely to territorial but also to local issues that were related to central policies. In addition, the relatively well-off financial condition, of which elected members' enumeration consisted of a major part of the revenue, also made them capable of employing more staff, and thus, able to have finer quality of argument and faster responses.

Case Studies

Two case studies are implemented in order to understand various relationship patterns between political parties and resident groups. Both of the two parties were grass-root oriented. The first case involves a resident group that has maintained a close relationship with a political party, or put more precisely with one of its elected member. The second case involves a resident group, which has tried to remain independent from its allying political party.

Table 5 Background Information of the Resident Groups

NAME	RESIDENT GROUP A	RESIDENT GROUP B
Year of Formation	1992	1980
Number of Member	About 3000 members 30 committee members	About 400 members 20 committee members
Original Aim of the Organization	To fight for improvement of the living conditions	To fight for improvement of the living conditions
Natures of activities that were recently held	Recreational & welfare: 80 % Housing Issues: 10 %	Recreational & welfare: 70 % Housing Issues: 30 %
Staff employed	No	Two full-time staff
Income	Membership fee Fund from the District Board Donation	Membership fee Fund from the District Board Charity Organization
Relationship with the political party	Close	Distant

Resident Group A was established with the help of a political party in the early 90's at a time when tenants have just moved in the new housing estate. A member from the political party, who was also a schoolteacher there, has act as the organization's advisor. However, instead of merely offering suggestions, the teacher played an active role in initiating activities of Resident Group A with the assistance of the political party. Its original aim was to tackle the various livelihood problems encountered by the tenants, for instance, inadequate transport facilities. A complaint hotline was established for the newly moved-in tenants to express their discontent. Moreover, with regard to its strategic function, Resident Group A act as a bridge for the political party to maintain regular contact with tenants there. It claimed to have about 3000 members and 30 committee members, but only about ten of them were active at the present. In 1994, the teacher won in the District Board Election.

What deserving the greatest attention was that according to information provided by Resident Group A, there was a remarkable change in the nature of the activities held. During the years of 1992 and 1993, about 70 % of the activities held were about livelihood affairs such as inadequate school places and sub-standard water quality, while the remaining 30 % aimed at providing recreation and welfare to the tenants, e.g., picnics. However, from 1994 onwards, change occurred to the proportion of the two kinds of activities held. In the year of 1995, about 80 % items were recreational in nature. Factors leading to such change will be analyzed immediately.

Factors Leading to the Change

The proportion of activities about livelihood problems was greatly reduced because the problems were now "passed" to the office of District Board member to handle. The chairman of Resident Group A, who was also a committee member of the office explained:

> We will use the name of the District-Board-Member office to hold actions concerning livelihood matters. Since Mr. Chan (pseudonym) is the District Board member of our estate, it is simply illogical if we do not cooperate with him and use his title to initiate this type of action. If the matter involved is not too political, we will sometimes expose the name of Resident Group A as well.

From the perspective of the District Board member, it was no longer necessary to take every action with Resident Group A. The recognized status and the fact that tenants would directly complain to him but not to Resident Group A now (Resident Group A has cancelled its complain hotline two year ago) enabled him to take action alone in the name of himself or with his own political party. Furthermore, more effective and efficient responses could be made for he did not need to symbolically consult the committee member of Resident Group A. In addition, it was also necessary for him to differentiate himself from Resident Group A by another reason:

> You have to use your own name. If you still stick to you allying organization, there may be the danger that tenants cannot recognize what you have done individually for them as their elected representatives.

The change to stress on the provisions of welfare and recreational services, was as well due to the feeling of inefficacy of its committee members towards

housing and other government issues as well. One of them expressed:

> By now, most issues are either improved or cannot be altered because of established policies. We have, for instance, demanded No XX Bus (pseudonym) to pass through our estate for years. We even took days off and petitioned with Mr. Chan about it. However, the motor company replied by saying that the fare must have been raised; otherwise, it did not agree with us. The Transport Department did not consent with our idea. It is a waste of time and effort to think of them anymore.

Their feeling of inefficacy was also intensified by certain objective conditions. They did not have the time and the knowledge to engage in policy analysis. Beside, the committee members began to take part in community work only when they joined Resident Group A. In addition, they lacked the recognized status or the legal legitimacy to have easy access with government officials and information. On the other hand, the provisions of recreational and welfare services demanded less expertise knowledge and skill. More importantly, they brought quicker and more palpable yields to the tenants. The chairman of Resident Group A put it frankly:

> Providing recreational and welfare services can give us a greater sense of satisfaction. We can have more control.

When asked about the future plan for Resident Group A, nothing was related to tackling with housing or other livelihood issues. The chairman continued:

> We want an independent venue so that we can sell some products to our members below the market price.

It should not be overestimated that the District Board member did possess

individually much more resources to enable him to make better policy analysis. His comparative advantage lied in the fact that he could depend on the political party's central office to provide the background information and the framework of analysis for him. He could also act collectively with other elected members from the same party, whose constituencies encountered similar problems as well.

Conditions Making the Co-optation Possible

Resident Group A was, to a very large extent, co-opted by the political party. The co-optation was manifested as the fact that it would cooperate with other tenant bodies in the estate to organize joint-functions, e.g., fun-fair parties; but it would never work with an organization that was set up by another political party. The chairman of Resident Group A said:

> They are sure which political party we are affiliated with. Thus, they will not approach us and we will not approach them.

Several conditions made the co-optation possible. The majority of the active committee members of Resident Group A (a total of seven), including the chairman, were also committee members of the District Board member's office. Beside, the committee members of Resident Group A were free to use the office's material and the venue for meetings. In addition, the District board member would donate money to sponsor Resident Group A's activities. A problem was brought by the sponsorship as the District board member said:

> I want to be fair to the Mutual Aid Committees also. Therefore, I will sponsor their functions as well. In festive times and in the summer vacation, I have to make donations more often and sometimes my allowance is not enough to cover my expenses. I have to give the money myself.

The analysis above reveals one of the possible relationship dynamics between political parties and resident groups---- a political party would establish a resident group in order to penetrate into a estate and garner electoral support; however, after the party's member was elected, the functions of the resident group were much more reduced, remaining as a body chiefly to cater for the recreational and welfare needs of tenants.

Case 2

Resident Group B was formed in the early 80's well before the emergency of political parties. Its formation was assisted by a community service agency to deal with redevelopment issues. It claimed to have about 400 members and 20 committee members. Two full-time staffs were employed.

There were two particularities of Resident Group B when compared to Resident Group A, about which the research will analyze. First, it will elaborate why Resident Group B could remain as comparatively independent from its allying political party. Second, it will explain why Resident Group B would concentrate on the provisions of recreational and welfare services like Resident Group A, despite of the fact that the former did have a longer history in fighting for tenants' rights and relatively abundant resources to do so.

Reasons for the Capability to Remain a More Distant Relationship

Resident Group B was more independent than Resident Group A, manifesting as its high level of policy autonomy, i.e., it has not held joint-action with the allying political party for about three years. This independence, to a

large extent, was a result of their stable financial condition. It has been sponsored by a charitable agency, which enabled it to maintain its own office and employed two full-time staffs. Thus, it did not need to maintain a "close and cooperative" relationship with its allying political party in order to obtain the necessary material resources. A committee member said proudly:

> We have resources. We do not need to follow them (elected members of the political party who was originally member of Resident Group B). We have "expelled" them (told them to find another office for themselves actually). But to other resident groups that are in dearth of financial support, I am afraid they cannot do so. Thanks for the charitable agency!

On the other hand, it should be realized that close affiliations with any political bodies were strictly forbidden by the charitable agency.

An Incomplete Independent

In spite of its higher degree of autonomy, Resident Group B still depended on the allying political party to nominate its committee members into the various committees of their respective District Board, through the latter's elected members. At present, six of them were serving as co-opt members in the District board. Even the above interviewee praised the advantages:

> First of all, we can get quicker and more accessibility of information. Besides, we can get to know a lot more people and thus, have a broader pool of people we know about. As long as conditions allow, we will continue to send our committee members to these committees.

However, the mutual distrust relationship between Resident Group B and the political party tended to be more intensified and palpable after the nomination

of the committee members into the District Board. An elected member from the allying party expressed:

> They should have made use of this valuable chance to express their suggestions. But seldom do they say something. On the one hand, they always ask us (she and her colleagues) to put forth agendas for discussions. On the other hand, they are afraid us of 'stealing the show'. When we suggest them to say certain points in the board meetings, they are afraid that we cheat them or play tricks on them. What a dilemma!

Conversion to Provide Recreational & Welfare Services

Another particularity of Resident Group B was its conversion to a recreational and social service body. Once was an active group in fighting for the improvement of tenants' living conditions, 70 % of its activities were now about recreational and welfare provisions, while the remaining 30 % were about livelihood affairs such as holding mass meetings about the double-rent policy, as revealed by a committee member. It seemed that Resident Group B possessed more favourable conditions to stay as a resident group chiefly fighting for tenants' rights than Resident Group A. It was because its committee members were more experienced in this aspect. Beside, it had closer connection with other resident groups. Furthermore, it had two full-time staffs and its own office to implement activities.

The conversion was partly a result of the absorption of tenants' complains by its allying grass-root political party or their elected members, as expressed by the committee member:

> In the past, our group was the chief force in fighting for tenants' rights and

helped them to improve their conditions. I began to participate in the late 70's.... Tenants do not complain to us anymore. In these years, they had gone to the District Board members or councillors for assistance.

The following explanation by an experienced social worker offers us another perspective to understand the goal displacement:

> Some resident groups were formed mainly to tackle redevelopment issues. However, after tenants moved into newly built units, those redevelopment issues cease to exist and fewer problems involving living conditions are encountered. In order to maintain the organization, recreational and other welfare services must be held continuously to keep members from leaving. In order to provide the services, they must apply for sponsorship from charitable agencies.

Implications of the Two Cases

Despite of the uniqueness of Organizations A and B, certain common features can still be drawn from them, which can help us to understand other resident groups as well.

Vulnerability of Resident Groups as Movement Organizations

The two cases demonstrate the vulnerability of resident groups as public housing movement organizations or its participants. Unlike political parties, they are not designated and obliged to keep surveillance on housing and other government policies in order to obtain the necessary publicity and electoral support. They may be originally established to tackle various livelihood problems. However, they are very likely to shift their emphasis to recreational

and welfare provisions, especially, when there was a strong feeling of inefficacy of their committee members, and when they tried to persuade tenants from leaving the organization.

Viewed in the perspective of these organizations, providing the above mentioned services tends to be more attractive than keeping a check on government policies. It is because they are capable to exert more control. Beside, a sense of satisfaction and palpable results are yielded.

The Matter of Legal legitimacy

Owing to their refusal or inability to participate in electoral politics, resident groups cannot enjoy the legal legitimacy that will enable them to have efficient and effective access to government information and officials. Such problem might be alleviated by allying with a political party. Then members of a resident group may join with the allying party's elected members to discuss matter of concerns with government officials, or to obtain information through the elected members (like what Organization has done). On the other hand, they can be nominated by elected politicians to become co-opt members of the District Boards (like what Resident Group B has done). But these two methods are inevitably subject to strategic considerations of the political party that is not necessarily willed to do so, for instance, they may nominate their own members.

The recently implemented Estate Management Advisory Committee (EMAC) may shed light on this problem. The status of a resident group is recognized by having a representative to participate in the committee. This scheme enables them to have better communication with the managers in their

own estates. The chairman of Resident Group A commented:

> Before I join the committee, the manager is not quite willing to meet us alone without Mr. Chan (the District Board member). Now our relationship is better and I can have easier access to him. Even he is not available, I can tell his secretary about the matter at hand.

Nevertheless, to be eligible, a resident group must have a certain proportion of tenants of the estate as members (Resident Group B failed to fulfill this criterion). The ESMC is advisory in nature and thus, has no real power. Whether their opinions are accepted depend on the considerations of the managers, which are in turn according to established housing policies.

The Source of the Resources

Albeit political opportunities structure should not be made identical with resources in order to avoid analytical ambiguity, the availability of resources is also important in determining the development of a resident group, as illustrated by the two case studies. According to the resource mobilization approach (for example, McCarthy, 1977), external support is crucial to a movement organization. However, apart from stressing on whether resources are acquired, attention should also be paid to the source of the resources. It is because the source not only affects the nature of the support available, but also the type of constraint associated. Case one revealed that since Resident Group A depended on the political party as its patron, it had to maintain a stance which was very similar to that of the political party, for example, Resident Group A would not cooperate with the resident body established by another political party. Case 2 showed that since Resident Group B depended on the charitable agency as its

patron, it was constrained by the regulation of the charitable agency, which forbidden affiliation with any political bodies and the sending of members to campaign in elections.

Conclusion

The chapter demonstrates that the strategic and policy orientations of the grass-root political parties accounted for their involvement into the struggle for tenants' rights. However, the political parties were less eager to implement collective actions as it was usually thought. The real challenge of the political parties to the public housing movement or resident groups was that they absorbed the potential force of tenant participation, but not in competing with resident groups to persuade tenants to join their actions. The case studies imply the vulnerability of resident groups as participants of the public housing movement and the problem of their legitimacy, as well as the need to focus on the source of support. It was not to exaggerate the strength of the grass-root political parties. But it could not be denied that they were more advantageous in the public-housing arena under the democratized context.

With regard to the analysis of the previous chapter (chapter 7), it should be more accurate to say that resident groups have never established a strong foundation, the emergency of the grass-root oriented political parties was just intensifying and making it more obvious of their already jeopardized situation.

The chapter can also shed light on the phenomenon that the grass-root political parties were less eager to hold joint-action with resident groups as revealed by chapter four despite of their opposition status. It was because they

were more inclined to take cadre-oriented actions, or raised issues through institutionalized channels especially through the parliaments.

Having elaborated that the grass-root oriented political parties have absorbed the potential force of tenant participation, by which collective grievances were mainly solved through the employment of parliamentary and cadre-oriented actions, the chapter, thus, accounts for the other side of the paradox----why the political opportunities structure did not favour the initiations of mass-oriented collective action by the public housing movement.

In the next chapter, the research will study another group of actors that rose or protruded to the political arena during the late transition period---- the pro-China resident organizations.

Chapter 8

Changes in the Political Alignment: the Protrusions of Pro-China Resident Organizations

The rising trend of collective action events and the comparatively large annual number of cases from 1991-1995, to a certain extent, were also caused by a factor that was unique to the Hong Kong context. It was the protrusions of pro-China resident organizations as a result of the transfer of sovereignty to China in 1997.

In the following, these organizations will be briefly described first. Then it will analyze why they jut out into the struggle for tenants' rights. The particularities of these organizations will be elaborated later.

A Brief Description

The collective action events recorded were initiated in the name of Organization C (pseudonym) that was also a federation of 28 leftist district-level resident organizations. According to their senior staffs, joint-action would be carried out in the name of Organization C with regard to public housing policies especially when they were germane to policy or territorial issues. But the district-level organizations maintained their independence in provisions of recreational and welfare services.

Most of them had a long history of existence. Organization C was established in 1985 while one of its affiliating organizations, for instance, was formed in the late 50's. However, they tended to maintain a very low profile

prior to the early 90's. From 1985 to 1990, the research has recorded only two cases that were initiated by Organization C, occurring respectively in the years of 1985 and 1986.

The 28 affiliating or district-level resident organizations covered a large part of the territory particularly the Kowloon Peninsula. 17 of them located in Kowloon; the other seven located in Hong Kong and the remaining four located in the New Territories.

The Protrusion of Pro-China Resident Organizations

The protrusions of these pro-China resident organizations were not confined to the domain of collective action, but also to the formal institution, which were manifested as their participation in the District Board Elections.

From 1993 onwards, about 30 % of the collective action events recorded were initiated by Organization C (see figure 19). With regard to the events it held, half of them involved close-door discussions with representatives from the Housing Authority.

Figure 19. Percentage of Collective Actions Initiated by Pro-China Resident Organizations

Year	Percentage
1991	7 %
1992	
1993	30 %
1994	27 %
1995	33 %

Note. Combined by the author from newspaper clippings provided by the Catholics Communication Center and the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies.

A change to high profile and more massive participation was witnessed on the district-level resident organizations in the recent District Board Election held in 1994 (see figure 20). In the 1992 District Board Election, there were just two pro-China candidates revealing the name of their respective organizations. However, in the next election in 1994, the number rose substantially to a total of 31 candidates. 20 of them won in the campaign with a successful rate of 65 %, which was higher than the 56.4 % of the Democratic Party and the 44.6 % of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (Louie and Shum, 1996).

Figure 20 Participation of Pro-China Resident Organizations in the 1994 District Board Election

District	No. of candidates sent	No. of candidates succeed (%)
Yau-Tsim-Mong	2	1 (50%)
Sham Shui Po	3	2 (67%)
Kowloon City	2	2 (100%)
Kwun Tong	13	7 (54%)
Wong Tai Sin	11	8 (73%)

Note. Combined by the author from the Resource Books of Hong Kong Elections, 1982-1994, & 1995 edited by Louie Kin Shuen and Shum Kwok Cheung (1994 and 1995).

Reason for Their Protrusions

An interview from Organization C attributed to their active participation since 1993 as a result of the increasing deprivation of tenants' rights by the

government. However, it should be realized that this explanation has little relevance with the jut-out of these leftist resident organizations. It was because if the level of seriousness of public housing issues had been the determining factor, they should have come out much earlier in the mid 80's, at the time when the controversial rent subsidy policy, i.e., the double-rent policy, was to be ratified.

Their protrusion actually can be understood as part of the pro-China camp's effort to have more active involvement in the political and livelihood affairs of Hong Kong during the late transition period, and in order to forge a more concerning and practical image to win support. Also in 1992, a new pro-China political party was inaugurated with the support of the Xinhua news agency---- the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong. The party was established to unite leftist political forces and to averse the reoccurrence of the painful defeat of pro-China interests in the 1991 Legislative Council Election.[1] It also initiated five of the total collective action events recorded by the research that were all cadre-oriented.

It was not astounding for pro-China forces to take part in the domain of public housing. They shared similar reasons of participation with the liberal camp. More than half of the population has been living in public housing estates. Beside, their high density made it easier to mobilize support and gain publicity. More importantly, like the liberal camp, the pro-China forces have a long history of community work in public housing estates. What they differed from the latter was that they tended to put more emphasis on recreational and welfare activities, while the latter's founding members were fighting for the

improvement of tenants' living conditions, during the 70's and the 80's. However, a close linkage has been maintained by these forces with many of the Mutual Aid Committees.

It can also be understood that had the Tiananmen Square Incident not happened, they could have come out earlier. It was because the image of the leftists was severely destroyed in a few years following the incident.

The Particularities of Pro-China Resident Organizations

There was another reason for the pro-China resident organizations to deserve individual attention---- certain particularities were possessed by them as compared to those resident groups that were usually adopted as the units of analysis.

The pro-China resident organizations tended to show a tolerant attitude towards the penetrations of pro-China political parties. Many of their committee members and chairpeople were members of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong and some of them belonged to the Democratic Foundation of Hong Kong. But it was opaque to understand the criteria of which label was to be exposed both in elections and in the course of the collective actions.

They also maintained a better relationship with the Housing Authority. Both the chairperson of the Housing Authority and the Housing Secretary expressed their gratitude in the ten-year memoir of Organization C. The relationship was possible because one of their chairpeople was also member of the Housing Authority. Three of their committee members were members of

the co-opted committees of the Housing Authority. The relationship enabled them to have easier access to representatives to discuss matters of concern. An interviewee admitted:

> Representatives from the Housing Authority are more willing to engage in discussions with us because we adopt a rational and practical attitude. But undoubtedly, since we have members serving in the Housing Authority, it is more responsive to us.

Apart from taking part in formal institution, their pro-China position made them capable of reflecting their opinions directly to the Chinese Government, through visits to Beijing. Beside, 20 of their members were Hong Kong Affairs Advisors and another 100 members were the Community Affairs Advisors.[2]

They were more abundant in resources. Three full-time staffs were hired by Organization C that also had its own office. An interviewee from Organization C revealed that it obtained a total of $700 thousand donation fee for the year of 1995. In one of its affiliating organization, for instance, five full-time staffs were employed. Because of their more formal structure and the ability to hire staffs to implement their duties such as policy analysis, they should be categorized as "organizations" rather than "groups".

Resident Organizations But Not the Movement Organizations

The above characteristics made these pro-China resident organizations very differed from those resident groups that were usually established with the help of social workers in the 70's and the 80's, which were usually regarded as the pillars of the public housing movement of Hong Kong. However, given these organization's massive involvement in the formal institution; their better

relationship with the Housing Authority and with the sovereign of Hong Kong, they could hardly fit into the concept of organizations of the public housing movement.

Conclusion

The protrusions of pro-China resident organizations demonstrated that the transfer of sovereignty to China brought about changes even in the power configuration of the public-housing arena during the late transition period. Despite of these organizations' involvement in the arena of public housing issues, very few research have cast their focus on these pro-China resident organizations. Future research focus should not only be placed on their initiations of collective actions, but also on their participation in other sectors that are related to the public housing movement, for instance, the formal institution and the Housing Authority. Attention should also be paid on whether they will experience similar developmental path like most resident groups, and the relationship dynamics with resident groups and their allying political parties. In addition, fecund results can also be produced to analyze their interaction with resident groups which tend to possess less material resources and less access to the formal institution.

Notes

1 In the 1991 Legislative Council Election, five candidates with pro-China label were all defeated, winning less than eight per cent of the vote cast (Miners, 1995).

2 The appointments of advisors was one of the united front tactics used by the Chinese Government to strengthen its local connections (Lam and Lee, 1993). The Hong Kong Affairs Advisors consisted chiefly of leading business figures and other prominent pro-China Hong Kong people from different business and professional sectors, while some of them were past or existing Legislative Councillors. The District Affairs Advisors were composed of pro-China District Board Members and the pro-China Urban and the Regional Councillors. The actual contribution of these advisors remained opaque.

Chapter 9
Conclusion

In the following, the empirical and the theoretical significance will be elaborated first. Then the prospects of the three groups of actors---- the resident groups, the grass-root oriented politicians and the pro-China resident organizations, in the public-housing arena will be analyzed. Suggestions of further research will be evinced later.

Empirical Significance

The various dimensions of the political opportunities structure elaborated previously did help to account for the rising trend of collective action events from 1991 to 1995 and the relatively large number of annual cases within the same period as witnessed in chapter four. The figures were the combined contribution of the retreat of resident groups from the formal institution; the policy and the strategic orientations of the grass-root oriented political parties, and the protrusions of pro-China resident organizations to coincide with the transfer of sovereignty; and the restrictively tolerant position of the government towards protests and assemblies.

Influence of the Political Opportunities Structure on Resident Groups

In spite of the fecundity of the above image, there was the paradox that the political opportunities structure facilitated the launchings of collective actions concerning public-housing issues in general, but not favoured the initiation of

mass-oriented collective action by the public housing movement in particular, especially its initiations of mass-oriented collective actions. On the one hand, the tolerant position of the government towards protests and assemblies act as a little hindrance when people found it necessary to organize collectively. On the other hand, despite of the decision of some resident groups to retreat from the formal institution and concentrated back to the initiations of collective actions (as revealed in the example of Organization X), the potential force of tenant participation was largely absorbed by the grass-root oriented political parties. The absorption was manifested by the fact that, during 1991-1995, the majority of collective action events held by resident groups were cadre-oriented, composing of not more than 20 participants. In addition, even a committee was set up by the Housing Authority to review the double-rent policy in 1992, it was shown that the public housing movement could not arouse the kind of ardent responses from tenants as those in the years of 1985 and 1986 when the policy was first mentioned or revealed. It was because in 1985 and 1986, there were all together 28 collective action events that opposed the implementation of the double-rent policy, with 16 of them being mass-oriented. In 1992 and 1993, the number of collective action events with similar claims was just five while all of them were cadre-oriented.

At the same time, the protrusion of pro-China resident organizations to coincide with the transfer of sovereignty, may pose or has posed similar kind of challenge to resident groups also, because of their more abundant resources; their long history of community work; their possession of elected District Board members; and their better relationship with the Housing Authority and the

Chinese government.

The two cases demonstrates the vulnerability of resident groups as pillars of the public housing movement under the democratized context, and the problem of legitimacy still bothering them due to their refusal or inability to participate in the formal political system when the channels of mass political participation became more open and enlarged.

Theoretical Significance

The research further justifies the need to avoid making political opportunities structure identical with resources in analysis (McAdam, 19896).

A clearer understanding of how the political opportunities facilitated and hindered the public housing movement of Hong Kong is achieved. More significantly, it can also be understood that the action repertoire of the movement, apart from determining by the availability of resources of the respective resident groups, was to a certain extent, influenced by the opportunities structure. The low level of propensity of repression of the government, and the informal procedure of the Housing Authority to deal with challengers, to a certain extent, accounted for the employment of soft and tolerant tactics by the challengers.

Apart from the above, two strange phenomena can be shed light on by distinguishing political opportunities structure from resources in analysis. They are cases in which there are few mobilizations in spite of the existence of a favourable political opportunities structure; or cases in which the abundant resources acquired does not lead to a high level of mobilization. It will be shown in the below section that the pro-China resident organizations may have

lesser proclivity to hold non-institutionalized collective actions after the formation of the Special Administrative Region albeit of their possession of more abundant resources.

The research shows the advantage of adopting the concepts, i.e., cadre-oriented vs. mass-oriented, to categorize the collective actions studied. Instead of merely differentiating various types of collective action, the concepts help one to understand the organizational strength or mobilization capacity of the organization responsible for initiating the action. In the research, it can be understood that the revival of collective actions during 1991-1995 did not imply that organizations of the public housing movement were much more strengthened than before as most of the actions held were still cadre-oriented, being small in scale and demanding less effort to initiate.

The research also shows that it is necessary to pay serious attention to the historical context of a social movement in conceptualizing the political opportunities structure. Since conceptualizations of the various dimensions are based on a particular social movement in a certain location and time-frame, an unconditional application of the dimensions to study another case will lead to the problem of being ahistorical, i.e., ignoring the particularities of the case as a result of its historical context. In the research, the establishment of the new dimension---- the policy and strategic orientations of political parties is necessary with regard to the fact that no political parties in Hong Kong could/can become the government. More significantly, this new dimension helps to clarify the challenge encountered by the public housing movement organizations under the democratized context, and the dynamics of the power configuration of the public-

housing arena.

Nevertheless, there reveals a dilemma pending to be solved---- how to conceptualize the political opportunities structure so that on the one hand, adequate consideration is paid to the historical context of a particular case and on the other hand, the problem of being too specific which will hinders comparative studies, is averted.

The important role of the state in the analysis of a social movement is also revealed. The research shows that how changes in the formal institution by the government led to changes in the power configurations of the public housing movement. The opening of the formal institution has once drawn the participation of resident groups, which gradually facilitated the emergencies of grass-root oriented political parties that have taken an active part in issues about public housing, and posed challenge to resident groups.

Besides, the typology of Kriesi (1995) about states and social movements is also supported by this case, as revealed in chapter six. A strong state with informal facilitation of access does help to account for a very moderate action repertoire. However, it should be cautious that whether movement organizations are strongly developed, apart from determining by the combination of formal and informal institutional structure, also depend on the amount of resources each of them can acquire individually.

Of equal significance is the idea that serious attention should also be placed on the interactions between political parties and movement organizations. In this research, the establishment of a new dimension, i.e., the policy and strategic orientations of a political party, helps us to understand a serious challenge faced

by resident groups---- the absorption of tenant mobilization by these parties.

The study by Maguire (1995) showed that political parties were more inclined to form alliances with movement organizations when the former were in an oppositional status. However, it is revealed in this research that any close alliance was absent between the grass-root oriented parties and resident groups. With regard to such conflicting observations, an inference can be made---- a political party will be less probable to ally with a movement organization if its policy stands are similar to those of the latter. It is because even the political party allies with the movement organization, its electoral support will not be much more enlarged given the overlapping of their original supporters. On the contrary, they are more likely to be rivals in mobilizing support as well as making the state to concede.

Hence, it is not just the similarity of policy stands that positively determined whether a political party will seek alliance with a movement organization, other factors such as if the cooperation will bring about an increase in electoral support should also be considered.

Prospects of Resident Groups

In spite of the challenges posed by the grass-root oriented political parties and the pro-China resident organizations, the research can still witness certain resident groups capable of initiating collective actions particularly those of cadre-oriented from 1991 to 1995. Hence, it can be inferred that what was/is more determining to some of the remaining movement organizations or resident groups might/may be the availability of resources including expert knowledge and

organizational skills. However, two recent events gave a negative impact on this aspect. They were the poor financial condition of the Hong Kong People's Council on Public Housing Policy and the disband of the Ecumenical Social Services Center.

On 5th October, 1995, a press conference was held by the Hong Kong People's Council on Public Housing Policy to announce of its poor financial condition as a result of the ceasing of financial backing from the World Council of Churches. It was said that the resident group would prepare to depart from its original role of housing rights activists and play the role of a social service agency to qualify for local funding. In addition, it was also claimed that the council has been forced to employ only one full-time and two part-time staffs to reduce cost.

In October, 1996, the Ecumenical Social Services Center was decided to be disband by its founding churches on the reason that the center's social workers helped to initiate collective actions that were too radical.

The struggle of survival of the Hong Kong People's Council on Public Housing Policy and the disband of the Ecumenical Social Services Center have been striking the survival of those local resident groups that have remained as the pillars of the public housing movement. It was because these two organizations have helped local resident groups to organize actions to fight for tenants rights especially when the rights were related to central policies, which were obviously lacking the knowledge and the mobilization skills to do so. In addition, they have also helped to establish and maintained some resident groups.

There are two possibilities left for local resident groups. Either can they

affiliate with political parties or apply funding from charitable agencies. However, no matter which of the possibilities are employed, their role as housing right activists will be ceased. Their policy and action autonomy will be severely reduced when affiliating with a political party as implied by the example of Resident Group A---- they, for instance, are unable to hold joint-actions with tenant bodies that are supported by other political parties, and that whether they take part in a collective struggle for tenants' rights will depend on the "invitation" of the political party. In order to qualify for support by charitable agencies, resident groups have to concentrate on the provisions of social and welfare services, and avoid those collective struggles that may be perceived as too radical[1]. After they get the subsidy, it can be inferred that the incentives associated with the provisions of welfare and social services such as the feeling of efficacy and more tangible results, will disinterest them to initiate collective actions concerning about housing problems or policies. Even for those central level resident groups that have shifted their focus to private housing, they still encounter similar challenge posed by political parties and leftist organizations. Besides, the accessibility to resources and, government information and officials are still hampered by their lack of legal legitimacy due to their refusal or inability to participate in the formal institution.

Prospects of the Grass-root Oriented Politicians

Although their strength in influencing housing policies should not be over-estimated, political parties are in a more advantageous position in the democratized context because of their availability and accessibility to resources,

information, government officials and representatives of the Housing Authority. The advantage stems from their legal legitimacy that is acquired through their elected members.

The failure of the "through train" in the political system may lead some of the grass-root oriented politicians to stress on the use of collective actions particularly non-institutionalized ones to express demands about public housing in order to highlight their efforts to prepare for the coming elections in 1998.[2] Nevertheless, it is dubious that they will thus, seek to establish a close and cooperative relationship with those resident groups that have not allied or affiliated with them before. As revealed by the research, they demonstrated a much higher propensity to initiate cadre-oriented collective actions. Even after they ceased to be Legislative Councillors, the incentive to engage in mass-oriented collective actions is not much enhanced given the facts that their publicity can still draw the attention of the mass media, and the cost involved in persuading tenants to join them (for example, they may blame the politicians of wasting their time when no tangible result is yielded). Though they may at time resort to mass-oriented collective actions, these politicians are more likely to initiate them with tenants from their allied or affiliated tenant bodies. On the other hand, the suspicion of some resident-group organizers and committee members towards politicians as shown by the research, make them reluctant to hold joint-actions with the latter even chances are existed. It is very probable that the politicians will mainly resort to parliamentary actions or institutionalized channels after they gain the legal legitimacy again.

Prospects of Pro-China Resident Organizations

They should be capable of taking a more active role in the public-housing arena than resident groups. It is because they are more abundant in resources, have representatives in the formal institution and the Housing Authority. However, given their pro-China stance, they are probable to adopt a cooperative and less critical position towards the Special Administrative Region and its housing policies. Even collective actions are initiated, they are inclined to be conducted through institutionalized channels such as having closed door discussions with representatives from the Housing Authority in order to avoid direct confrontations with the Special Administrative Region Government.

Suggestions of Further Research

It remains opaque of the relationship and interactions between the pro-China resident organizations and the pro-China political parties. Some committee members of the former are also members of the latter. Therefore, it deserves to be analyzed if there is any change in the nature of their relationship after the transfer of sovereignty when there is lesser need to remain a united front towards the colonial government. Besides, focus should be placed on if they will experience similar relationship dynamic like that of resident groups and the grass-root oriented political parties.

Conclusion

It is demonstrated that the public housing movement of Hong Kong does not face a bright future either in the domain of the political opportunities structure or

in the domain of resources. Nevertheless, it does not denote that collective actions concerning about public housing problems and policies will diminish. Instead, they will be more likely to be held by political parties and pro-China resident organizations in the form of cadre-oriented actions.

Notes

1 In the press conference, the Hong Kong People's Council On Public Housing Policies admitted that it failed to apply funding from the Community Chest for its actions were regarded as too radical.

2 The Legislative Council was disbanded after the transfer of sovereignty to China. It was replaced by a Provisional Legislative Council. Some of the Legislative Councillors and those from the Democratic Party refused to join the Provisional Legislative Council and thus, were unable to retain their seats. Nevertheless, those elected members of the District Boards, the Urban and the Regional Councils can still maintain their seats after the transition. The first Legislative Council Election after the transfer of sovereignty is scheduled to be held in mid 1998.

Appendix

Background of the Interviewees

Background of the Interviewees	Number
District Board Members	2
Committee Members of Resident Groups	3
Social workers (organizers of resident groups)	3
Social workers (non-organizers of resident groups)	3
Senior staff of pro-China resident organizations	2
Staff of political party	1

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